

THE GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKER (Illustrated). By C. W. R. KNIGHT.  
THE BRICK COTTAGES (Illustrated).

# COUNTRY LIFE

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# COUNTRY LIFE

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E. O. HOPPÉ

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR.

7, Cromwell Place, S.W.

# COUNTRY LIFE

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## The Country Hour and the Town Hour

IT is perfectly well known that at the present moment a trial of strength is taking place between the Trades Unionists on the one part and the friends of agriculture on the other in regard to the hours of the agricultural labourer. The Trades Unionist is determined that the forty-eight hours week shall be applied to the farm. It is scarcely worth while to argue with him, because scarcely a pretence is made that agriculture, or even the agricultural labourer, is going to be benefited by the projected reform. We are doing no injustice to the Unionists in saying that they take this attitude mainly in order that all the ranks of labour shall stand, as nearly as possible, on the same footing, so that if in the last resource "direct action" is to be resorted to, agriculture will toe the line with other industries. Obviously it would be to re-enact the old fable of the wolf and the lamb if we were to urge the calamitous effect that this change would have on the production of food. The wolf, having made up its mind to devour the lamb, first advances one argument in favour of its action, and when that fails produces another. Innocence cannot save the victim. So with labour. Its leaders will not admit the difference that exists between the work of the countryman and that of the factory hand. At least they profess blindness. But those who are not the leaders may find very substantial reasons for cooling their ardour.

The basic fact is that for a long time now the Trades Unionists have taken every possible means of inducing the agricultural labourers to make only short engagements. This

is obviously not to his advantage in the slightest degree. Wherever the labourer has prospered in the past he has done so by reason of a long engagement; that is, for twelve months or at least six months. Where a man is engaged for a year such irritating questions as that of the tied house, for instance, do not arise. That controversy does not exist in the north of England because the labourer is a yearly tenant. He can cultivate his garden or do anything else he likes in the perfect assurance that he will be able to reap the fruits thereof. But the Trades Unionist has urged upon him this consideration: if he have a long engagement he cannot make a lightning strike. In other words, the shortest possible engagement is the most suitable in the eyes of men who are looking forward to class warfare. But the arrangement cuts two ways. If the labourer will not bind himself for longer than a week, it is obvious that he cannot bind the employer either. During this month and its predecessor very significant object lessons have been given to the farmer and labourer alike. The latter has been reduced to idleness for days at a time, and the farmer is compelled to pay him just as if he were working. During the weeks that are coming the possibilities of work on the farm will be reduced to a minimum, and the farmer's natural course will be to reduce the workers to a minimum. In other words, pay off all but those holding essential posts, such as shepherds, cattlemen and the like. A certain amount of this must go on and no Government can force the farmer, or any other employer of labour, to hire men if he does not wish to do so. What is the result of this going to be in the town? The increase of the wages of industrialism has been carried from one trade to another, and the man who fails to find a job on the farm will assuredly seek it in the town. There he would probably do better than the unskilled labourer, so that the very unsound policy which is being advocated for the country is going to react very badly on the city populations. Leaders of the Trades Unions do not perhaps recognise that because, in many cases, they are out of touch with the sentiment of their own followers. But the bulk of town workers know it full well.

One might naturally expect help to come from the Agricultural Committee of the House of Commons. But they, too, are being subjected to pressure by the Labour leaders, and as the number directly interested in agriculture is comparatively small, there seems to be little ground for hope that they will make a determined stand. In other words, it is doubtful if they will have the backbone and the conscience to refuse to sin against the light. Anyone who has even a slight connection with a rural constituency knows that the present hours of labour are insane. They carry within themselves the seeds of the ridicule showered upon them. Nothing more absurd was ever imagined than that a country should sanction the stoppage of work on a farm at the season of hay and corn ingathering at three o'clock in the afternoon. They call it five; but it really is three. It is four o'clock by the sun, which in spite of summer-time, remains the farmer's clock, since it determines when work can and cannot be done. But in addition the usual practice is to give the men an hour in which to groom, stable and feed their horses, so that actually the stoppage of work on a summer's day is three o'clock by the sun. This is very nearly paralleled by the ordinance that makes it incumbent for the second milking to be done in overtime. If we were describing town-made laws for the country out of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera only laughter would be provoked; but for a country which has set its mind to producing the maximum amount of food to do this is beyond all reason. The town worker must be the eventual sufferer, because every handicap placed on agriculture means an addition to his food bill. Wages the farmer can pay and thrive. But labour he must have or pe ish. And the rural workers themselves know this to be true. They are rejoiced at having their wages advanced, but bewildered by the shortening of their hours. They do not know what to do with themselves when the day's task is finished.

## Our Frontispiece

As frontispiece to this week's issue of COUNTRY LIFE we print a new portrait of the Viscountess Astor, whose election to the House of Commons has aroused such great interest here and in the United States.

\* \* It is particularly requested that no permission to photograph houses, gardens or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper.



## COUNTRY NOTES

WITH the political issues dealt with by Mr. Lloyd George at Manchester we have nothing to do here so far as they touch only the narrow questions on which parties are divided; but there was one passage at least in the address which soared far away from the little questions of the hour. It was that in which the Prime Minister pointed out that the peculiar characteristic of this war is that it has ended in a challenge to civilisation. Nothing could be more true, and nothing could be more utterly neglected by the average man. People go on with their schemes for doing this and doing that, and are so busy that they will not spare time to look at the great menace threatening the world like a surcharged thunder cloud. Some few recognise it, but say that symptoms of the same kind were observed after the French Revolution and that the common-sense, and so on, of mankind will prevail now as it prevailed then. That is an easy doctrine to preach, but it will not suffice to show why the great civilisations of the past were checked and sent to ruin. What historian or philosopher has been able to tell us clearly why Greece fell, and why Rome, to go no further back, and to say nothing of those great civilisations of the remote past of which ruins and relics alone give us an inkling? Nor is it possible to stop the onward movement of anarchy by means of argument. An age of revolution has always been, as far as we know, an age of unreason. The one way to safety is that all who realise the danger, all who are gifted with penetration of thought and sobriety of judgment should join together to oppose that splitting up of society which Bolsheviks advocate on the ground that there must be a destruction of all that exists before they can build a new Jerusalem.

VISCOUNT GREY'S position at Washington has become anomalous now that the Senate has rejected the League of Nations, in the interest of which he was induced to go to America. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that his action will disprove the rumours of an early return. Soon or late the United States must do something to fulfil the promise of President Wilson. It cannot be imagined that the head of the State will be left stranded by his countrymen. The League of Nations was the embodiment of an American ideal, and it may be taken for granted that there are idealists enough in America to see that it does not die. The presence of Lord Grey, therefore, may still have a great purpose. As his general health has improved, and his eyesight is much better, there is no personal reason for his return, and this country has in him so excellent an ambassador that it will not desire his early recall. Indeed, no better appointment could be made than that of Viscount Grey of Fallodon as our permanent ambassador at Washington.

REFERENCE is made in our leader to-day to the failure of the Agricultural Committee of the House of Commons to stand up for agriculture on the question of the forty-eight hours week. At first we were given to understand that practically all the Members of Parliament who are enrolled in the Agricultural Committee were opposed to the imposition upon the farmers of the working conditions which prevail in the factories. As long as the question was looked at with individual common-sense there was no difference of opinion,

but what seems to have happened is that when they went down to their constituencies they found that the Trades Unionists were taking strong views and they have not had the courage of their opinions. There was a complete wheel round, and in this way the interests of agriculture are seriously threatened by the Agricultural Committee. It may be asked if the Trades Unionists are in a position to dictate in this way, and the answer is plain. In every agricultural district the industrials outnumber the farm labourers, and among the latter missionaries have been at work preaching that it is to the interest of the farm worker that he should be exactly in the same position as the factory hand. It is clear, then, that unless there is a strong rally of those who put the welfare of agriculture above everything else the country must suffer considerably from the want of courage evinced by members of the Agricultural Committee of the House of Commons.

"TYDE, tyde, whate'er betyde, Haig shall be Haig of Bemersyde." Thomas of Ercildoune's prophecy has been fulfilled in a way, though it is wrong to say that since it was uttered in the thirteenth century the same family has possessed Bemersyde. The name, in one case at any rate, was adopted by the heir of the previous possessor. A Haig has lived at Bemersyde, but descent from the original family cannot in every case be established. Still, General Haig has adopted a fine and appropriate title. It would be difficult to imagine any other so capable of endearing him to his countrymen. The way is now made plain for the acquisition of this estate by the nation and its presentation to the great soldier. Lieutenant Haig, the present owner, has placed the properties for disposal at a sum of £53,700, and the idea is to get up a subscription sufficiently large to present them to the General without any expense on his part. A strong body of support is already assured. Lord Haig would certainly find Bemersyde a very beautiful residence, prophecy or no prophecy. It lies in the Merse, once the most devastated and now the most fertile district in Berwickshire; indeed, there is truth in the Scottish Herald's saying that its history has been ploughed up. No other residence of equal age now survives as a mansion, and the reason is simple. Riding a foray in the Merse was a common occupation of Northumbrians from the time of the Battle of Hastings till well into the eighteenth century—at first as a kind of warfare, afterwards, when the Crowns were joined, as a border thieving of the good old sort. In consequence, search will be made in vain for fine houses or noble castles in that district. No sooner was one put up than it was burned to the ground. The Merse was too closely adjacent to strong castles such as Norham, Berwick and Wark to escape from the expeditions of the Percys, Greys, and other famous fighting houses of the Border.

### AFTER MANY DAYS.

Rest—and the blissful hour,  
Peace—and a mind content,  
Love—life's fairest flower  
Scattering sweetest scent.

No more the unnamed Fear,  
The Agony of Dread;  
Passed is the long night drear—  
Morn—and a prayer well said!

R. D. R.

SIGNS are not wanting that the high price charged for whisky is going to have its usual effect in an increase of illicit distilling. Three cases were tried in Glasgow last week and a fine of £200 with the alternative of four months' imprisonment imposed in each. Sheriff Boyd, in passing sentence on one of the culprits, who, according to the report, "made excellent whisky, containing 86.4 per cent. of proof spirit," remarked "he is quite an artist." Illicit distilling—or shebeening as it was called—used to be very common in Scotland. Stills were frequently discovered in the purlieus of towns and on remote mountains and waste places. Whisky, as the recent cases prove, is very easily manufactured at home, and very cheaply. Experience showed that shebeening used to be more difficult and more costly to repress than smuggling. The smuggler had to get his cask overseas, and although he had many an ingenious trick for defeating the gaugers, such as sinking the barrels in the offing till they could be removed with safety, or hiding them in caves, smuggling was nevertheless an unprofitable game.



**SHEBEENING** is much more difficult to control, chiefly because it can be carried out in town or country. The only difficult implement to procure is the "worm," and the sign hardest to conceal is the smoke. Many an illicit distillery has been discovered by the wisps of smoke rising from some place underground on a lonely moor. The Glasgow cases form a warning to the authorities that if whisky continues to remain at the present very high price the police will have their hands full in dealing with those who manufacture it secretly. The latter will have an overpowering temptation to do so as the cost of whisky is negligible when the duty is left out of account. Shebeening, from a moral point of view, is the very worst method of supplying the public. Not every illicit distiller would trouble to earn the praise of being an artist. He turns out his "rot-gut" new and coarse and strong; in fact, capable of doing the utmost possible damage to a man's inside. The drinking, like the manufacture, is secret, and goes on usually in the worst and most degrading company.

**EVERYBODY** must have wondered now and then where Mr. Lloyd George got that sense of style which is so apparent in the more inspired passages of his oratory: how far was it due to his perfervid Celtic temperament, how far to reading? The last part of the question is answered in a very intimate discourse printed in the Christmas Number of *John o'London's Weekly*. As might have been expected, the Prime Minister has saturated his mind with the language of the Old Testament. That was the fount from which John Bright drew his eloquence, and it is easy to understand that he should delight in those expressions of pure prose poetry into which Bright ascended every now and then. He is a great general reader, and from his character it comes as no surprise that he has a keen eye for a new writer. His reading is general and catholic. We are glad to learn that he loves fiction, and has a library well stocked with works of history, politics, travels, poetry and biography. It is, indeed, from a good acquaintance with English literature as a whole and a special knowledge of one or two authors in particular that an orator like the Prime Minister is able to furbish and use the orator's weapon.

**WHEN** a remarkable scientific discovery is made it usually follows that the wits produce skits and *jeux d'esprit* which really, in many cases, throw a considerable light upon the discovery. No one can ridicule a theory until they understand it. This has proved true of Einstein's light and relativity, as it was of Darwin's "Origin of Species." From the grave *Times* downwards many papers have produced skits and parodies which are both instructive and amusing. One of the best is that in *The Wykehamist* of November 21st, headed "Einstein and Authority." An alternative title might have been "Meditations of Hector McCorquodale Dadd," whose musings in true schoolboy fashion are of the latest deliverance of science, mingled with forebodings such as he would have had more reason to entertain a generation ago than he has to-day. The skit is, however, very well written, and will repay reading by those who are curious about such things.

**OXFORD** has brought the Michaelmas term to an end by a minor engagement in Congregation on the perennial cause of warfare, compulsory Greek. Professor Gilbert Murray proposed that Greek should be compulsory for all those taking honours except in science and mathematics, but his proposal was defeated. This was, however, but a by-battle. The main issue, as to whether there shall be any compulsory Greek at all, is still open, and that will probably be fought out again in Convocation. "The man in the street" can only see one end to this fight, and that the defeat of the Tories. He does not hate Greek because he is a Philistine or because he wants revenge for the trials of his boyhood. He would very likely vote for more Greek and not less if he thought that it would be enough to do real good. What he feels certain of, however, is this, that the amount of Greek necessary to get through Responsions or—in the unregenerate days of Cambridge—the Little Go is not enough to give any real cultivation or appreciation of the language or literature of Greece. But it is enough to cause a good deal of hindrance and waste of time to a man who has learnt no Greek at school—an object in itself decidedly not worth attaining.

**AN** event of truly historical importance occurred when the newly elected French Chamber welcomed the twenty-four members of the regained provinces of Alsace Lorraine.

It should mark the end of a long feud, as we cannot believe that German opinion, when it recovers sanity, will see anything more in this than a righteous restitution. There was naturally considerable exultation. "The day of glory and joy has at length arrived" was the text of M. Siegfried's speech of welcome. He recalled that France in 1871 was beaten to her knees and exactly in the position which her conqueror of that time occupies to-day. The war has left France suffering indeed from the loss of men and treasure, but in a position which will enable her to assert herself as being again what she used to be, the foremost Continental nation. It is no wonder that the voice of M. Clemenceau trembled with emotion when it came to his turn to speak. He is the only survivor of the National Assembly at Bordeaux, and his words came direct from the heart: "From a history of blood and tears has come forth again the day of infinitely sweet rejoicing." Yet his practical energy rose above emotion. "We must re-make France," he concluded, "let us get to work."

**THE** University Rugby match is for many people the most enjoyable of the sporting events of the year and supplies the pleasantest opportunity of seeing old friends. Tuesday's meeting after five years was a great occasion, and the match proved worthy of it and of the King's visit. Everything was wonderfully like old times—not only the crowd and the shouting and the blue figures darting to and fro, but the touch of frost in the air and the red sun trying to fight its way through the fog and failing very dismally towards the end of the game. The game itself was as fast, close and dramatic as need be. Cambridge won by seven points to five, and fairly deserved their victory. Their supporters, however, never felt easy until the whistle blew, for the Oxford backs constantly looked dangerous. They scored but one try, but once they were in their stride there was always a cry of agonised excitement: "They're in!" And the gallant drop for goal which hit the crossbar was certainly unlucky. Cambridge did succeed in dropping a fine goal, and they possessed the outstanding personality of the match in Clem Lewis. His beautiful kicking to touch and the astonishing pace at which he is able to start make him a great match winner.

#### THE LEADER.

—Seek ye a Captain? said the World grown old—  
Fond martyrs of a dream, ye seek in vain!  
My sons are wiser grown, their blood more cold,  
My princes war for gain.

—Seek ye a Captain? said the Lord on High,  
To those that seek I send my chosen still,  
Born of men's need, of time and destiny  
And Mine abiding Will.

—How will ye crown your Leader? saith the World—  
With careworn days, and vigils heavy-eyed;  
Or one poor flag above a grave unfurled,  
The dream for which he died?

—I crown your Leader, He that crowneth saith,  
My gift unseen a greater gift than all—  
To know his people strong and undismayed  
Though he should stand or fall.

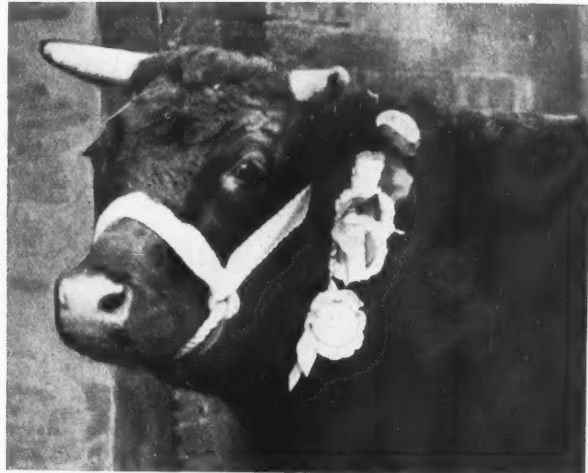
MARY-ADAIR MACDONALD.

**IT** is difficult to understand why the butchers are so anxious that meat should not pass out of control. It seems absolutely certain that the public would gain thereby, for during the last four or five years meat has been accumulating in the cold stores of Australia and the Argentine, with the result that it is now coming over here in tremendous quantities. The difficulty, in fact, is how to get rid of it. The Continent might perhaps take a share, especially Austria and Hungary, but for the fact that there is little cold storage accommodation in this part of the world. We are, however, informed on very high authority that the supply of chilled meat is now far beyond what is possible of consumption. The trouble arises from the fact that this is not an increase in the permanent supply, but simply a result of the damming of the river of importation during the war. When a schoolboy makes a dam across a tiny stream a considerable quantity of water is accumulated, and if it be let loose, to his great joy it, for a moment, floods the field below, but very shortly after the waters subside, and the stream, reduced to its old proportion, trickles along. So it is with the supply of meat. There may be difficulty in dealing with the present glut, but the permanent supply is not likely to reach the demand, far less to exceed it.

# SMITHFIELD STOCK SHOW AGAIN



THE KING'S RED POLL STEER, FIRST PRIZE.



THE KING'S BREED CHAMPION CALOMEL.

**A** RETURN to old times is pleasantly indicated by the resumption of the Live Stock Show at Smithfield, which had to be abandoned in the later years of the war. The occurrence of this function has had the closest associations with Christmas in London since the year 1793, when it was first held. Of course, the earliest of the series of exhibitions was on a scale very much smaller than that to which it has grown. At the beginning the Smithfield Show was only an incident in the sale of Christmas beef, with a prize list that did not exceed 50 guineas; but it steadily grew in popularity, especially among the farmers. They, at the time of year when agricultural work is slackest, found in it a good reason for coming up to London, where the appearance of their rubicund faces always reminded the town dweller that Yuletide was at hand. The Show held this year was inevitably inferior in some respects to its immediate predecessors. There was only six months' notice to prepare the animals, and in consequence the standard is not reached. The satisfactory feature is that the type of butcher's beast never was better and never gave a surer augury of the success

that may be looked for in the years to come. The Show is also remarkable in so far that for the first time the championship has been awarded to a yearling. It gave great satisfaction that the King, with his usual tact and his interest in the concerns of his subjects, visited the Show the first day, and received, as might be expected, an extremely cordial welcome.

A perennial interest of the Show arises from the fact that Smithfield never hesitates to alter the verdict of preceding exhibitions. Mr. Cumming's Blue Bell, a blue-grey heifer cross-bred, was sired by an Aberdeen-Angus bull, and her dam was an Angus and Shorthorn cross. At the Scottish National Fat Stock Show, Edinburgh, this animal was placed "reserve," with Mr. Alexander Reid's cross-bred steer Lewie as champion. The position of these two animals was reversed at Smithfield. Another upset verdict was that at Birmingham, where the King's red

heifer, Calomel, received the Championship with the Duke of Portland's white Shorthorn, Welbeck Lass, as reserve. This decision was also upset at Smithfield. The honours were decidedly with Scotland. Blue Bell did not only receive the £50 silver cup for the best heifer, but



ONE OF THE KING'S HIGHLAND CATTLE.



THE DUKE OF PORTLAND'S WELBECK LASS.



SIR JOHN G. COTTERELL'S HEREFORD STEER.



also the champion plate of 100 guineas for the best in the Show, and the gold medal to the breeder was taken by Mr. Cumming. Another victory was that of Lewie, another

Scotsman, and Mr. G. Findlater with a pen of mountain wethers carried to Scotland the £50 champion plate for the best pen of three long-woolled sheep or lambs in the Show.

## THE GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY C. W. R. KNIGHT.

TOWARDS the end of May or the beginning of June one may walk through the pine woods or beech groves of Kent with a very fair chance of being attracted to the nest of the greater spotted woodpecker by the weird little bat-like cry of the young ones, whose incessant "chip chip chip" is kept up all day long, and which increases in vehemence as the parent bird approaches them. Should the young be left for an unusually long time, their metallic note will gradually subside to an almost inaudible whisper, as though, tired of screaming for food, they have dropped off into a comfortable doze.

Besides the beech and pine, the greater spotted woodpecker will often hollow out a decaying birch or apple tree as a receptacle in which to lay her five or six glossy white eggs; and, although a tree with a sound exterior may occasionally be selected, she more often chooses one that is obviously dead, and sometimes one so rotten that it would be a simple matter to enlarge the entrance to the nest with a penknife. In this respect, as in many others, she differs from the more ubiquitous and much larger green woodpecker, which bird, unfortunately for the embryo oologist, loves to bore into hard live wood for a distance of some 2½ ins. before striking the dead interior in which the nesting cavity is to be constructed.

The nesting hole of a greater spotted woodpecker can usually be distinguished from that of the green on account of its smaller size and also for the reason that it is shaped rather like an upright ellipse, though either kind is liable to be appropriated by a pair of starlings just as the rightful owners think that their tunnelling operations are at an end. In either case the chips of wood that have been excavated may—if searched for before they are hidden by vegetation—be discovered at the foot of the tree. Both of these woodpeckers are extraordinarily close sitters, and it is a useful plan, if one is desirous of ascertaining whether or no a suspected hole is occupied, to blow into it and then quickly place the ear to it. If the bird is sitting, the ear will detect her slightest movement.

The nest which is portrayed in the illustrations accompanying these notes was situated high up in a dead fir tree



FEEDING A NESTLING; A VERY RAPID OPERATION.



in the midst of a pine forest, and was discovered quite accidentally, one of the parent birds flying from it when an adjacent tree was struck. Such a dead tree, denuded of all foliage, offered exceptional photographic opportunities from a pictorial point of view, and it was accordingly climbed with a view to finding out whether the young woodpeckers who had set up their little cries were recently hatched, or had arrived at a more interesting age; though not without a risk of the whole thing snapping off like a carrot, for it swayed under the unusual weight of a thirteen stone human body in a most alarming fashion. The young, however, could hardly have



ON THE WING.

been hatched for more than a day or so, for they made no movement, and no further demonstration than by redoubling their metallic little cries. Had they been fledged they would certainly have crouched silent at the bottom of the nest. The next step was to place in the adjacent tree, and on a level with the nesting hole, a bundle of bracken wrapped in a piece of sacking; to accustom the birds to an unusual object that would, when the appointed time came, be replaced by the camera. Of this dummy "camera" the woodpeckers took not the slightest notice, returning in a very short time and disappearing into the nesting hole as though nothing



THE YOUNG ONE CALLS FOR FOOD.

untoward had happened. All this occurred on May 24th, and it was not until June 14th that it was convenient



WHERE THE GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKER FIXED HER NUTS.

to try for any photographs; but, since this day turned out to be fine with but little wind and the young woodpeckers were "chipping" energetically, there seemed to be every chance of a successful issue. Then came the business of climbing up to the dummy camera, of stripping it of its sacking, and of fixing the camera to the little platform and the platform to the tree; then a line had to be run from the shutter of the camera to the bottom of the tree and thence to a little shelter which my companions had meanwhile constructed, and then, when all, so far, was in order, the camera had to be focussed on the nesting hole, the shutter set and a dark slide placed in position—all in readiness for the first exposure.

Now, all of this may, on paper, seem to be simple enough, but, as a matter of fact, it meant an extremely trying three-quarters of an hour. First the platform was fixed at the wrong level and caused the camera to point about roft. too low, then a branch interfered with the focussing arrangements, and lastly the whole affair slipped sideways when it was expected to remain firmly in position. One's feelings on such an occasion and in such a position can better be imagined than described, particularly as with face dripping with perspiration and arms on the point of giving out from sheer exhaustion, one gazed down on to the careless companions below stretched out among the bracken and puffing contentedly at their cigarettes—absolutely oblivious of the pent-up feelings above them. However, at last all was arranged, the line had been tested, and it only remained to climb stealthily down the tree (being careful not to pull the string) and to creep into the little shelter, where it was at least possible to rest comfortably and recover from the recent exertions.

My companions, having aroused themselves from their lethargy, had noisily gone their way, hoping to delude the woodpeckers into thinking that everyone had departed, and it now only remained to be seen how soon the woodpeckers would come back to feed their young. Unfortunately, however, they seemed to feel that things were not normal,



FEEDING HER YOUNG



LACKING THE ALERT APPEARANCE OF ITS PARENTS.

for, although they flew from tree to tree uttering their alarm call, they obstinately refused to approach the nest, and the disquieting conviction was forced upon me that something was amiss. I wondered whether I had perhaps left some bright part of the camera still exposed, and had almost decided to once more climb the tree to make quite sure when one of the woodpeckers decided the point for me by settling within a yard of my shelter, peering in at me and then, with an ear-splitting "Tchak," dashing off like a bullet. That decided matters, and I arose to make a new hiding place of dead branches and bracken. Then the question arose as to how to enter it without being noticed by the woodpeckers. Looking around me I noticed a decayed fir stump some 20ft. high and only a few yards from my shelter. I found that this was so rotten that by a succession of pushes it could be made to sway from side to side; so, setting it going in the most ostentatious way, I crept back to and entered the shelter. Whether it was the swaying tree that diverted the attention of the woodpeckers from myself I cannot say, but within a few minutes of its regaining the normal position I saw one of them return to the tree and sit crosswise on a branch like an ordinary perching bird, hesitating there as though wondering if anything fearful would occur. Since, however, all remained quiet, she presently hopped on to the trunk and climbed up, in her usual jerky fashion, to meet the red-capped head that was thrust out of the nesting hole towards her. To it she transferred food with a series of incredibly swift jabs of her head, and in a moment she was gone. I had exposed the first plate.

Once more I crawled from my shelter, climbed to the camera, arranged a plate, and descended, again to set the tree in motion and return to my shelter. That morning I obtained some half a dozen photographs without further real difficulty, including one of a youngster's head protruding from the nesting hole and in the act of "tchaking." I noticed that the call of the parent birds when they had regained composure was much softer than the alarm note, for then they uttered a liquid "kewp"—something like the cry of a sparrow hawk when she calls to her young.



On visiting the place three days later I found that the young woodpeckers had flown. Their calls, sounding from low down among the trees, told that they were not far off; and although a photograph of one of them was obtained, they proved to be exceedingly difficult subjects, for they



THE GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKER HAS A HABIT OF TURNING ITS HEAD QUICKLY FROM SIDE TO SIDE.

have a trying habit of keeping the trunk of a tree between themselves and the would-be photographer.

As regards the food of these birds, I have failed to discover that they ever eat ants, which insects form the chief food of the green woodpecker, though they do feed upon the larvæ of insects in dead wood, berries, beech mast and hazel nuts.

I have recently had an opportunity of watching a greater spotted woodpecker splitting open and eating hazel nuts, an operation that I had never seen before, and one which it may interest the readers of these lines to know something about. I was walking quietly through an old and disused quarry when my attention was attracted by a sharp tapping sound. At once I stood still, hoping to find out the cause of it, and wondered whether it might be a nuthatch or great tit. After some five minutes I saw to my surprise a greater spotted woodpecker fly quietly from a small sallow tree and disappear over the bushes close by. I then walked forward to the sallow tree, which was growing from the quarry's side, and saw lying on the ground at its foot a whole collection of hazel nut shells, among which were scattered the green husks. Without further delay I concealed myself in the undergrowth in the hope that the woodpecker would return once more to the sallow tree. Hardly had I done so before she made her appearance with a hazel nut in her beak. Settling without hesitation, she hopped up the inclined trunk of her tree and, placing the nut in a little cavity on its upper side, she commenced by sharp blows of her bill to split it open. This she soon succeeded in doing, and having eaten—and wasted a great deal of—the contents, she once more flew off, but settled this time in a hazel bush some 30 yds. away. Here she proceeded to hunt for another nut, which she did by hanging on, almost upside down, to the extreme tips of the leafy twigs, and having found one she proceeded to twist it from its cluster with the most energetic movements of her head and neck, eventually succeeding in wresting it free.

On her return to the little cavity to split it open she seemed to feel dissatisfied with the fit, and accordingly she picked it out again with the tip of her beak and hopped some roins. further along the trunk. Here was another groove in a much better position from my point of view; in fact, I could distinctly see the woodpecker press the nut into it with the edge towards her and carefully rearrange it when it slipped sideways at the first stroke of her bill.

It may not be generally known that the greater spotted woodpecker is fond of apple pips, and on one occasion I saw one of the birds flying from an orchard with an apple impaled on the tip of its beak, suggestive of what in America is known as a "toffee apple."

Although this woodpecker is provided—as are all woodpeckers—with an extensile tongue, it seems not to make so much use of it as does the green woodpecker, which bird finds this device of the greatest possible use in extracting ants from their underground quarters.

## MILK-RECORDING SOCIETIES

THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE has done well to remind dairy farmers of the great importance of their joining milk-recording societies and keeping careful records of the produce of their cows. The example they give is more eloquent in its figures than any exhortation could be. With milk at 3s. a gallon an 800-gallon cow will produce £120 worth of milk annually, whereas if the animal is only a 400-gallon cow £60 will be the value of the produce. Now it is really impossible to know exactly the yield of a cow unless the weighing and the book-keeping are careful and accurate. That does not exhaust the advantages. The habit of recording a cow's yield every day will have the effect of showing at once when there is any divergence from its natural yield. If there is a marked falling off there must be a good reason for it, and the sooner that reason is investigated the better for all concerned. But records should be kept mainly for the purpose of raising the standard of the herd. Many farmers used to be content with 400 gallons a year; then 650 gallons was accepted as the standard, and now we know of good herds where the attempt is made to realise 1,000 gallons. Owners of cows should therefore make themselves acquainted with the excellent scheme of the Board of Agriculture for encouraging milk recording. A society must consist of at least ten members owning altogether a minimum of 100 cows. But it should be remembered that the larger the society and the greater the number of cows the smaller will be the individual cost. The Board helps to the extent of 50s. a herd, but has a rule that the grant shall not exceed half the total expense of a society. The milk recording year commences on October 1st. Farmers may say the opportunity has gone for this year, but they will be well advised to take the matter in hand now and even start the work of recording the produce of each cow as soon as possible.

They have the knowledge, and can have themselves formally entered as a society in October of next year. These are the main provisions, but there are others of a more or less formal character which are necessary in order to keep the affairs of the society and those of the Board relating to them in good order. Full information can be obtained by applying to the Board's Live Stock Officer in the district, whose name can easily be obtained either from the District Agricultural College or from the County Agricultural Organiser. At the end of the milk recording year a society must furnish to the Board a return of the milk yield of all the cows in the herds, and members must apply for certificates if they desire them. The commercial value of these certificates has already been proved in the sale of cows. A certificated cow, other things being equal, never fails to command a better price than an uncertificated one of the same quality; but the cowkeeper ought not to think too much of an incidental and temporary advantage of that kind. He should rather prepare for such an improvement in the milk qualities of his herd as will perceptibly advance his profit. In our experience everybody who has begun and carried out a policy of recording the milk yield of each cow in a herd has succeeded in greatly improving the yield and therefore the value of that herd. It is a thousand times more satisfactory to build up a milk herd than to go to the market and buy cows more or less at random. The best judge can easily be deceived, because, unless the strain is a milking strain, the good appearance of any particular cow will be no guarantee that its progeny will fill the pail. In these days when provision is made for the registration of non-pedigree shorthorns this consideration is of increased and increasing importance.



## A PICTURE EXHIBITION FOR THE BLIND



HON. MRS. EDWARD BOUVERIE AND CHILD.  
(Engraved, after Reynolds, by J. Watson, 1770).



THE COUNTESS OF SUSSEX AND LADY BARBARA YELVERTON.  
(Engraved in mezzotint, after Gainsborough, by H. Every, 1871).

MESSRS. AGNEW'S, in aid of the funds of St. Dunstan's Hostel, have brought together in their Old Bond Street gallery half a dozen superb examples of eighteenth century portraiture. Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney and Hoppner were magicians. Like many other celebrated conjurers we have long since become familiar with all their tricks. Every handbook of criticism tells us how they did it. Yet we continue to marvel at every performance. They tossed off masterpieces with the effortless dexterity of a cook tossing pancakes. Occasionally Reynolds was a trifle dull, particularly when he was thinking of the "old 'uns" and his visit to Italy. Fashionable Mrs. Bouverie in no way suggested the classics. Sir Joshua, however, in the lovely picture on these walls, posed her against a column and an urn, as, in another celebrated portrait of the same lady, he gave her a Roman tombstone—anyway George III said it was a tombstone.

When Gainsborough was bored by his model he never troubled to conceal his weariness. In "Peter Auriol Drummond" he was frankly bored. Though the face is clever, the figure is that of a stuffed sack. But when he was interested his brush became electric. At Old Bond Street note the magnificent distinction of the "Countess of Sussex and Lady Barbara Yelverton," as well as the glorious impudence of the "fighting parson," Sir Henry Bate-Dudley, who holds his walking stick like a foil. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "I will not allow this man to have merit." He certainly had impudence, and Gainsborough recorded his character very faithfully.

Romney and Hoppner possessed a mercurial touch. Nothing could be happier than Romney's "Henry Paulet St. John," or Hoppner's three Miss Beresfords—almost lyrical tributes to youth and high spirits. These glowing young ladies must have made Ashbourne a centre of pilgrimage for susceptible hearts. The story does not seem to end properly. Miss Selina married a country parson. Miss Judith and Miss Frances died old maids. There is a lost secret in the hectic cheeks and piercing eyes of the lovely Judith.

No great feeling is revealed in these portraits. The artists could not give what they themselves lacked, being creatures of irritable impulse rather than of passion; but they did unquestionably mirror an age of peculiar fascination, when all the women were beautiful, and all the men were bold.

At least, that is what Reynolds would have us believe, and contemporary evidence supports his judgment. Mrs. Bouverie was famous for her looks. She is not here quite so handsome as in Lord Rosebery's "Mrs. Bouverie and Mrs. Crewe," one of the most delightful canvases the President ever worked upon. Her lips are a trifle pinched. She dandles the infant in a rather amateurish manner. She is somewhat doubtful of the whole business. In many of Reynolds' portraits of mothers and their babes we feel that the nurse is anxiously waiting round the corner praying to Heaven that her mistress will not drop the precious child. Rousseau taught the society leaders of his time to rear their offspring, and Reynolds—the old bachelor—suggests that some of them were no adepts in mothercraft. Mrs. Bouverie was certainly a beauty, and her "democratical" ideas extremely advanced, as befitted an enthusiastic Foxite. (Sir George Trevelyan never properly explained why all the beautiful women followed C. J. Fox.) Although in the portrait the lady seems to be whispering "prunes and prisms," she was the reverse of prudish and defied all conventions. Horace Walpole's tart remark about his fair relation must be looked for in Lord Glenbervie's journals.

Reynolds' "Hon. Mary Monckton (Lady Cork)" is a picture of a simpering lady who

must have had her finger on her lips, as in this portrait, when she told Dr. Johnson that Sterne's writings were very pathetic. That privileged old bear flatly contradicted her. "I am sure they have affected me." "Why, that is because, dearest, you are a dunce." Dunce or no dunce, she had intelligence enough to give Sheridan his introduction to political life. On the strength of her recommendation he was elected M.P. for Stafford, a seat he retained for over a quarter of a century.

Happy the artists who had such sitters. Happier still the men and women who could find such genius to give them immortality.

The lover of art will derive an additional satisfaction from this show, inasmuch as it is held on behalf of one of the most beneficent institutions in this country. "Pity the poor blind" has always been a compelling appeal to compassion. It is, however, characteristic of Sir Arthur Pearson that he gives his attention more to practical help than to sentimental pity. Indeed, he refuses to admit into the vocabulary of his institution anything that savours of making the blind feel that they are suffering from calamity. His gentler and more hopeful phrase is that they are suffering from a handicap, and there is no man living who has done more to lessen this burden than Sir Arthur Pearson himself.

HUGH STOKES.

## BECKETT V. CARPENTIER

BY THE HON. NEVILLE LYTTON.

"H E'S a one. He's a b—— thoroughbred at the game." That is what a man was saying at a neighbouring bar when we were trying to kill a ten-and-sixpenny thirst, engendered by the pestilential atmosphere of the Stadium, after the fight was over. As soon as Carpentier took off his elegant grey kimono it was obvious that he had improved in physique since I last saw him in the ring with Gunboat Smith. His pectoral muscles are stronger and his chest is deeper; his legs always were, and still are, marvellous; there is a small roll just above the knee that is worth travelling miles to see. Then his calves and thighs are magnificent, the bulk of his weight being below the waist; his arms are not big, especially the biceps, but a boxer does not want much biceps—it is not a hitting muscle. His deltoid muscles (point of the shoulder) are of excellent quality and shape, and there are rippling muscles that lie between the shoulder blades and the spinal column that always mean great hitting power. The Bombardier has these also to perfection.

Carpentier came into the Stadium with a light, springy step; as he reached the ring he waved his hands to his countless admirers, then he sat on his chair and looked around and recognised a lady friend; he immediately kissed both his hands to her, giving her a most graceful smile as much as to say "I am fighting for you, my dear." He was certainly not nervous, but as certainly he had the "now or never" feeling. He gave Beckett one or two searching looks just as a crack billiard player looks at all three balls before he makes his stroke. At such moments his face was extraordinarily handsome; it is true that he has got more serious than before the war, but this adds greatly to his beauty. You can see that his defence must be good, because, notwithstanding all these years of boxing, his nose is still shapely. His hair grows beautifully close to the eyes, yet underneath the forehead is high and the general expression intellectual. His neck is strong but it is not bull-like, and there is a suspicion of an Adam's apple, which is rare in boxers.

Beckett seemed to me a little on the fat side. When he fought Goddard I thought he would not be nearly quick enough for Carpentier and that his defence was far from perfect, and this has proved to be the case. He is to my thinking too heavily topped, that is, his legs are not strong enough for his trunk. His short arm blows are very powerful, but his leads lack power and precision because they spring from the shoulder instead of the foot. His plan was obvious, namely, to weaken Carpentier by short arm blows to the body; Carpentier seemed determined not to put off to Round Two what could be done in Round One.

At the sound of the gong Carpentier walked briskly forward and gave Beckett one hand to shake and then turned to face him; without a second's pause he sprang at him and landed a light left in the face. It was not much of a blow, but it gave an impression of terrific speed; then followed the shortest of clinches, Carpentier immediately stepping away. Then he took a steady look and pounced like a tiger; this time he landed a left fair and square on the nose, and Beckett was worried. In the clinch that followed Carpentier was the most active, Beckett's blows landing on Carpentier's back. Beckett swung at Carpentier on the break away, but Carpentier was well clear. There was another steady look, a slight left feint, and then a terrific right which landed on the jaw just to the left of the point of the chin. Beckett went muzzy and toppled over. No one doubted that it was a true knock-out. In all, Carpentier had landed three blows—

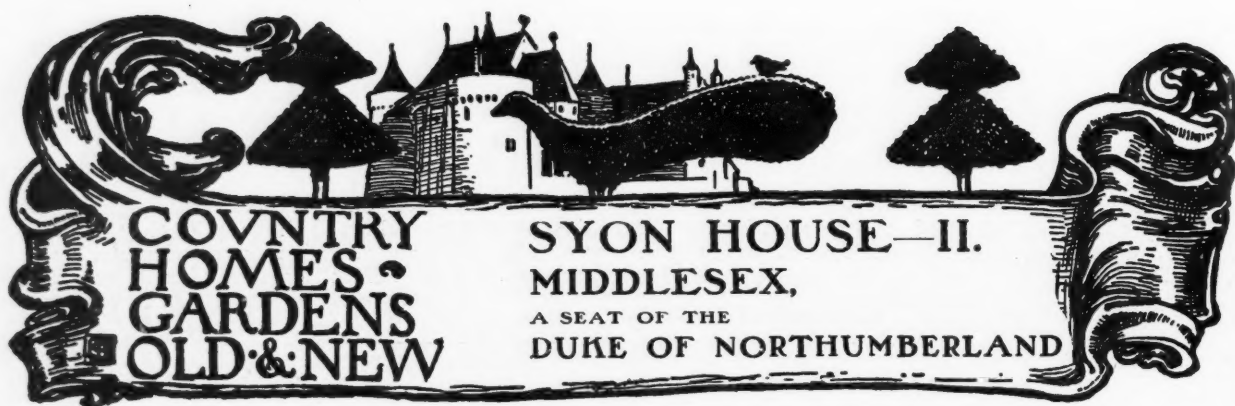
the first left lead, which was nothing; the second left, which was very severe; and the third and last, which was as fine a blow as I have ever seen. In all these three Carpentier never gave away his intention; his springs seemed to be without premeditation, and yet the last one was delivered with an action like a baseball pitcher. People talk of disappointment; personally, I would much rather see half a round of skilful boxing such as this than forty rounds of the usual stuff.

Much has been published about the measurements of the men; measurements mean nothing. It is the relation of one muscle to another that matters, and this relation cannot be measured with a tape measure. Much also has been said about Carpentier's deterioration during the war owing to dope and other causes. All I can say is that this was about as severe a test for nerves as anyone could have; the bout was boomed like no other bout ever has been. Carpentier had not had a fight upon which so much depended for many years—in fact, all circumstances conspired to put the wind up him, and yet there he was, more alert, more precise, more terrible than ever. Therefore his constitution must be sound as a bell.

The police control and Mr. Cochran's management were beyond all praise, but what a pity that such a bad hall should have to be used for such great occasions. It is an oblong shape, so that those sitting at either end can see very little and the balcony is supported by enormous, chocolate-coloured columns which completely hide the ring from those sitting in the seats behind them. The first celebrity that I noticed was Georges Hackenschmidt, the great wrestler, looking fit and well and very smart in a smoking jacket and a grey trilby. Then there were Mr. Bottomley, Monsieur Walkley the dramatic critic, who, possibly, found the entertainment more stirring than many of those he is obliged to visit in the course of his professional duties, Pat O'Keeffe, Colonel Claude Lowther and a host of others from every stratum of society. The smartest and best dressed of them all was the Pullman car official who travels on the boat from Boulogne to Folkestone, booking passengers' seats for the train. From the expression on his face when Carpentier won, I gathered that he must have bargained with Carpentier on the boat—"You shan't have any seats in the first train unless you secure me one at the ring side"; and Carpentier, slightly seasick, must have said *Entendu*. Of course the Prince got a tremendous reception. The crowd about me was garrulous and good-humoured. On my left was a gentleman from the States who had come with his wife; he was much perturbed because his lady, who was very beautiful, had received an invitation to a dance without him. "Let 'em know right away," he said, "they can't invite the widow without the widow's mite, that's me, wee Willie." On seeing the lively Descamps, Carpentier's manager, he said: "If Carpentier were to come into the ring without Descamps, it would be like a submarine going to sea without a periscope." On my right was a benevolent-looking old gentleman, who murmured: "How nice to find the Stadium *quo ante bellum*."

I am glad that Carpentier won, first, because Carpentier did better in the war; it will not be forgotten that for his flying exploits during the Verdun battle he had *une tres belle citation*. Second, because Carpentier is the more graceful and more beautiful, and surely symmetry and grace are among the most important things in sport. Third, because there are still some English people who think that France is a "dud" country in spite of Clemenceau, in spite of Foch, in spite even of Carpentier.



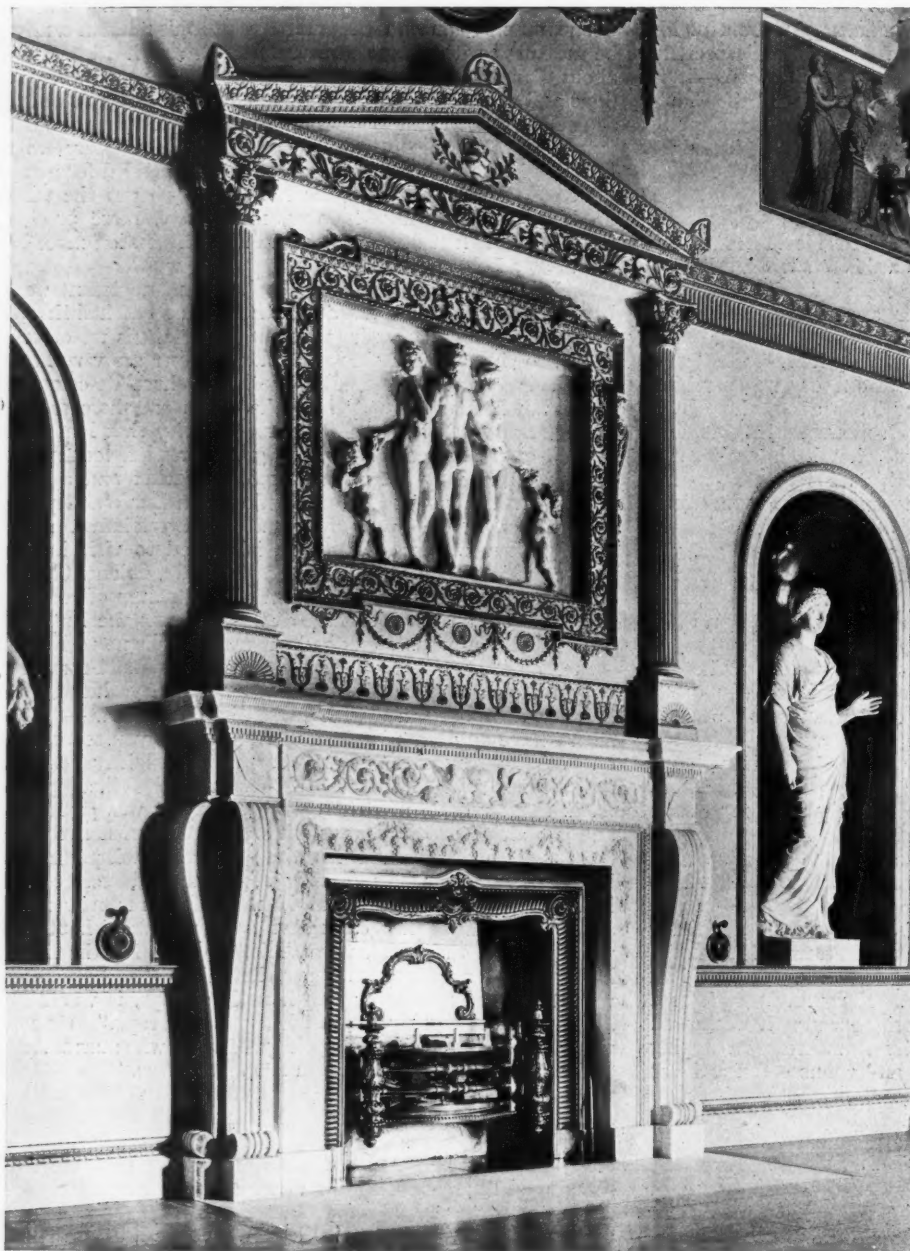


ROBERT ADAM took a great interest in the detail of the arrangements of social life, and deals with the subject at some length in his "Works." He seems to have thought that French ways of living were more developed than our own, and very early in the day he praises the Continental flat system. He calls attention to the little use made of the dining-room abroad, excepting for meals, and advocates the interposition of a room between the English dining-room and the withdrawing-room on the ground that the ladies should not be disturbed by the noise made by their lords and masters, a recommendation which seems a sad reflection on the manners

of the time. It recalls Hamlet's question, "Is it a custom?" and the reply, "One more honoured in the breach than in the observance"; showing how, even after a century and a half, from James I to George III, the architect, like the dramatist, could still see some room for improvement. The stately Mrs. Hannah Moore tells us how she had occasion to repress the volatile Boswell on his appearance in the drawing-room. Moreover, Lord Lyttelton, when Hagley was being planned by Sanderson Miller, made a point of this intervening room on the very same grounds.

On entering the dining-room (Fig. 2) at Syon colour is once more left behind, and a return is made to an effect of white, but now in a warmer tone and one which is freely relieved with gold. The rather feeble chiaroscuro freize panels are probably by Cipriani. The dark marbling of the niches behind the statues is not original. The ceiling, which follows a design of December, 1761, resembles in its main features that of the library at Shardeloes; but here the distribution is improved by a wide, flat band of ornament carried round close to the cornice as a frame to the ceiling design. The bands are also deeper and stronger, as, indeed, the greater height of this room required. The details have, moreover, a more refined character. The dining-room would seem to be one of the apartments first completed at Syon. Each end of the room has an apse with a screen of columns across it, and the half domes (Fig. 3) are well ornamented, but without, however, possessing the extreme beauty of those at Kenwood. A flat band carried round the room level with the top members of the cornice of the order connects the end and side walls, a treatment favoured by Adam. The size of the room is 66ft. by 21ft. 7ins., with a height of 21ft. 7ins.

The shutters to the windows here and elsewhere are well panelled and enriched, and the great depth due to the thick walls has given the opportunity for a vertical panel of ornament independent of the actual shutter. The doors, all in magnificent mahogany, are set out in six panels with wide fluted bands between inner and outer mouldings. The ormolu mountings are fine specimens of Adam's treatment of such details.



Copyright.

1.—IN THE DINING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."





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2.—THE DINING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



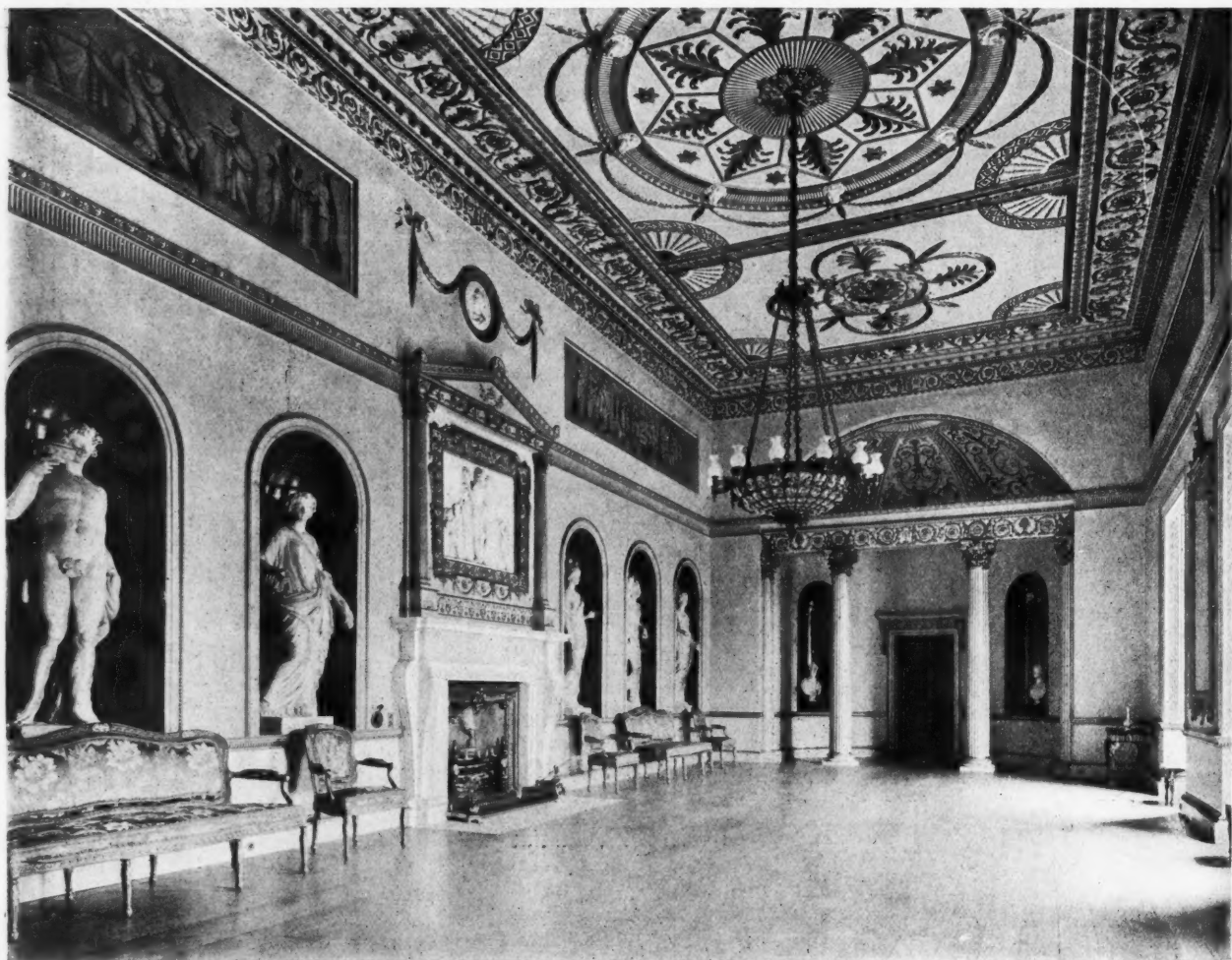
3.—CEILING OF ONE OF THE HALF DOMES IN THE DINING-ROOM.

There seems to be some want of relation between the marble mantelpiece and the overmantel, which is in plaster framing a marble panel of the "Three Graces" (Fig. 1). The whole composition is not quite so happy as usual. On several occasions Adam seems to have been shackled by some antique that had to be taken up and worked in. The design "Chimney-piece for the Dining Room at Syon, 1762," is exactly followed

with only a few minute differences, giving a greater richness of detail. Thus, the columns have been fluted and a horizontal band of ornament introduced between the plinths.

There are two good mirrors on the walls between the windows, with console tables below, one with a mosaic top from the Baths of Titus, and the corresponding one with a slab of Italian marble. The wood framework below is carved and gilt. There are two console tables with yellow marble tops from Northumberland House, and a set of Hepplewhite chairs. Three of the statues in the niches (Fig. 4) are old copies of antiques ordered by Adam, whose letter on the subject has been preserved. The importation of antiques, whether marbles or pictures, was continuous at this time. Nollikins, Reynolds and other artists, besides the Adams, engaged in this traffic, one which had so enraged Hogarth. Nollikins went so far as to ridicule a sculptor

who was too good an artist to make money in this facile way by trading on his expertness. Robert Adam seems, however, very soon to have arrived at the sensible conclusion that large antique statues in niches were not very suitable decorative features in an English dining-room, and they no longer appear in his later works. His "eating rooms" are always differentiated from





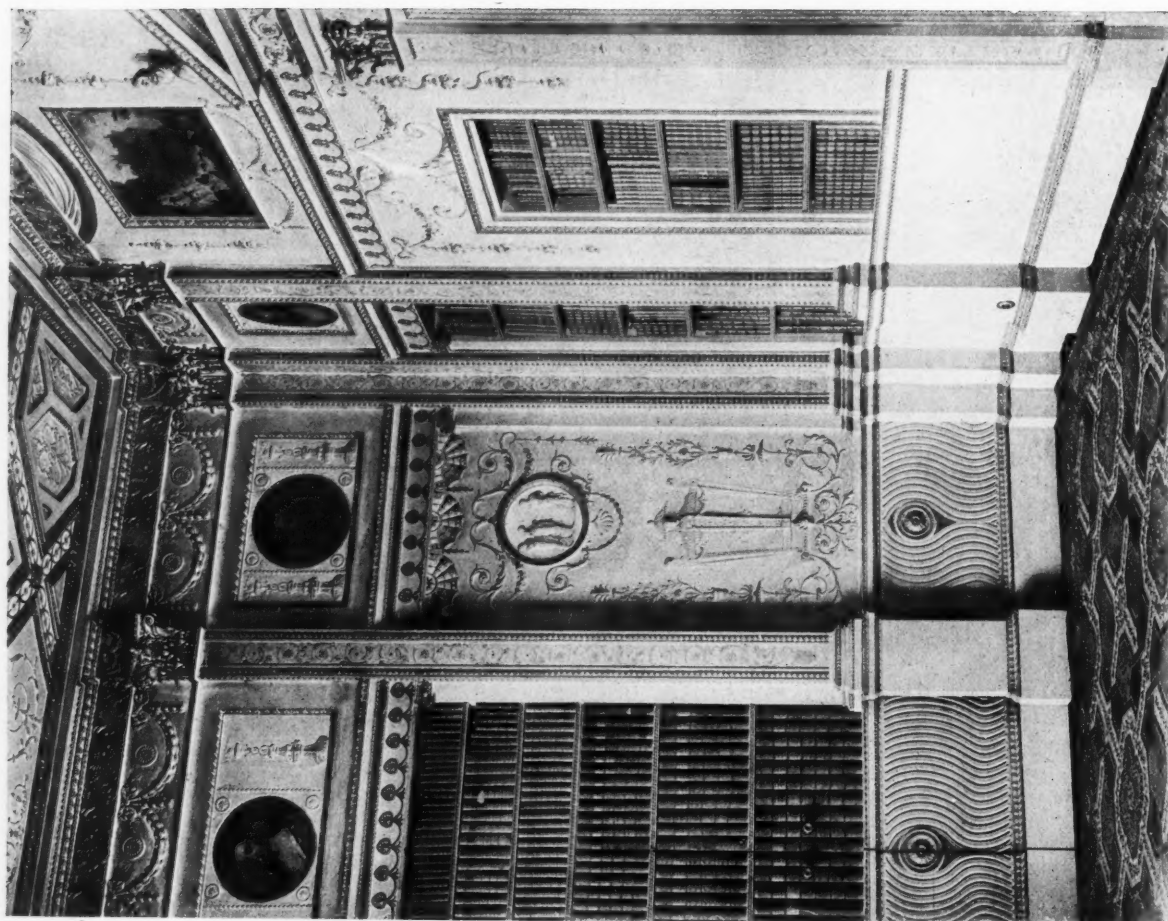


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5.—THE LONG GALLERY.

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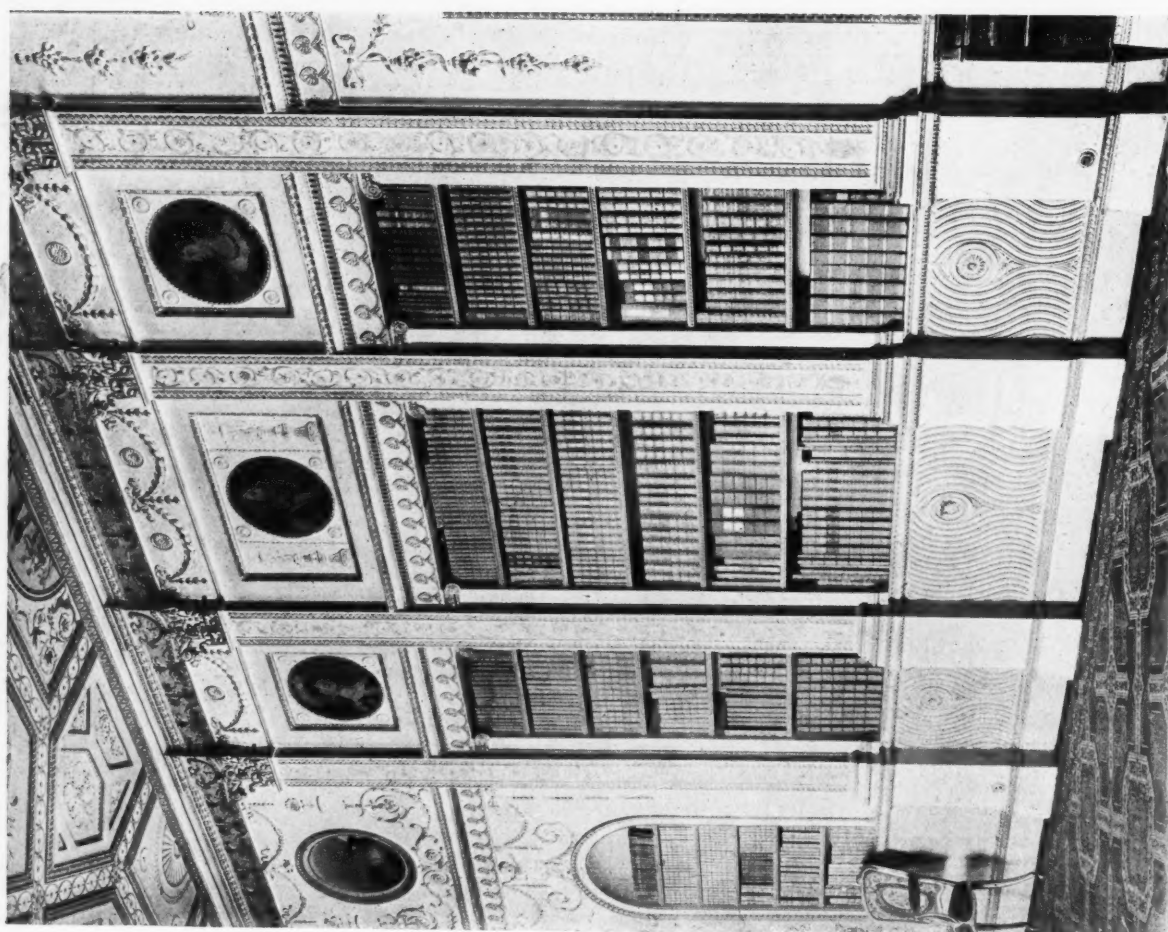




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7.—A CORNER OF THE GALLERY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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8.—RECESSED BOOKCASES IN THE GALLERY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

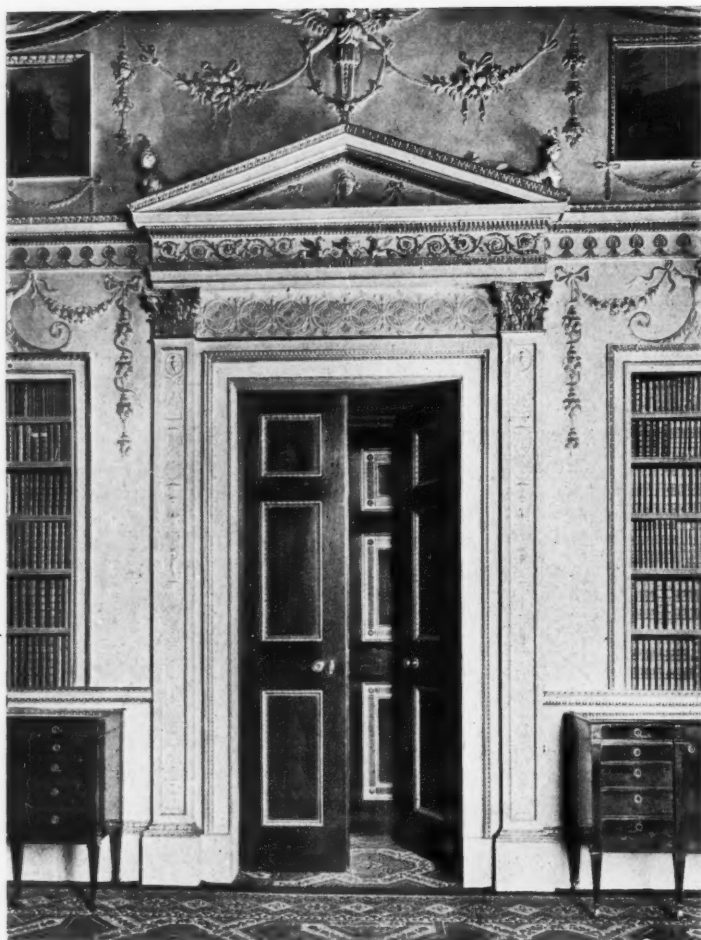


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8.—WINDOW SIDE OF LONG GALLERY.

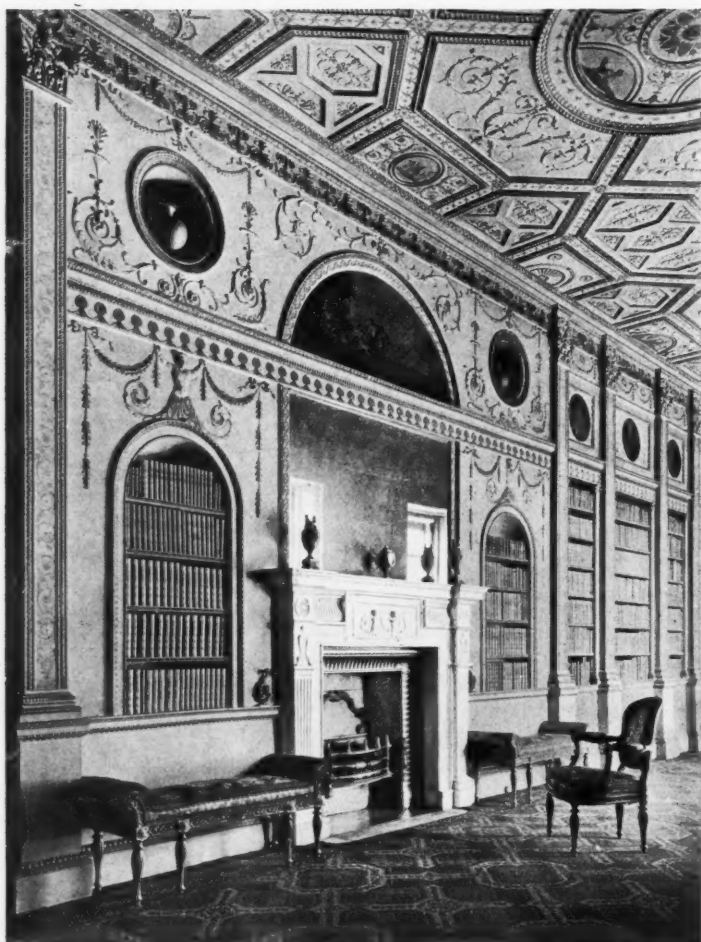
"COUNTRY LIFE."





Copyright. 9.—DOUBLE DOORS IN THE GALLERY.

"C.L."



Copyright. 10.—CENTRE OF THE GALLERY.

"C.L."

the other interiors, and have a recognisable character of their own.

Adam, in describing the dining-room in his "Works," says that "Instead of being hung with damask, tapestry, etc., dining-rooms are always finished in stucco and adorned with statues and paintings, that they may not retain the smell of the victuals."

The drawing-room at Syon, which follows immediately after the dining-room, is Adam's ante-room to what he intended to be the real withdrawing or ladies' room, "The Gallery" (Fig. 5), which he planned out for their particular delight. "Finished in a style to afford great variety and amusement," is his own significant expression.

It certainly is a marvellous room, because it is the gallery of Elizabethan and Jacobean England seen through a different medium. It will not satisfy the antiquarian or classically minded critic, but it will be of absorbing interest to all who can appreciate the treatment of a very difficult problem and the workings of an original mind.

The main problem was the narrow width of 14ft. in relation to a length of 136ft. and a height the same as the width. These are quite the old dimensions for galleries in England, and it was only the orthodox classic ideas of proportion as taught in the Palladian School that made any solution seem impossible. Robert Adam accordingly solved the problem on his own lines, not, perhaps, without some observation and reflection on the many older galleries which he must have seen in the many and various parts of England that he had visited.

His solution is a closely grouped unit of four pilasters with wide intervals, or bays, centred upon the three doors and two fireplaces, so that in the perspective a sense of spacing and variety is obtained which mitigates the great extent of the length. The opposite wall, containing eleven windows, could not be made to agree with this set out, so it has been boldly disregarded.

The pilasters, however, are retained to frame up the windows and to maintain the balance of the two sides, while providing the vertical lines necessary to the perspective effect of the whole.

The lighting of the gallery being on one side only, with a consequent shadowing of the wall spaces between the windows, conceals the fact that the ceiling lines agree with the pilasters on the one side only and not with those on the other and opposite wall.

The ceiling is daringly set out with circles repeated down the length of the room and held in an octagonal framework separated by squares. Unity is given by cross lines, which lead the eye down the vista of the gallery with a tendency to expand its apparent width. The wide compartments containing the doors and fireplaces do not appear unduly expanded, thanks to the minor features of niches and panels, which are cleverly introduced.

The main order of pilasters is supported by a secondary Ionic, between which the book shelves are fitted in. The bases of the two orders are well adjusted. The deep frieze formed above the architrave cornice of these minor pilasters is varied with landscape and portrait panels, and by some circular recesses for busts and vases.

As a library for a lady's collection of books (Fig. 10) this interior is remarkable. Robert Adam was a lover of libraries, a collector of MSS. and rare books, and he devoted much attention to their disposition as a feature in a fine interior.

On the window side of the room (Fig. 8) is a series of small relief panels in stucco duro polished like marble, for which material, indeed, they are often mistaken. Work of the same style was noticed in the rotunda at Kedleston, only at Syon the ground of the panel is not coloured and the antique character of the design is more marked.

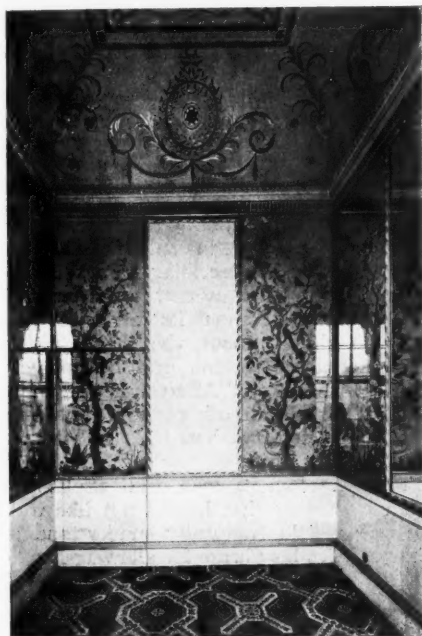
As previously stated, in the design of this gallery Robert Adam's idea was to provide a series of points



of interest and entertainment for the company of ladies who would use it. The two end towers, as well as the centre projection form conversational retreats. The two "closets" at either end are veritable miniature boudoirs. One of the pair (Fig. 12) is circular and has a dome supported on small columns all wreathed with arabesque stuccoes and each standing on a circular pedestal. The interval between is a niche, and when the door, which is part of a circle, is shut, the scheme completes itself without any apparent entrance. From the centre of the highly decorated dome hangs a gold birdcage designed in harmony with the scheme and completed with a stuffed bird. The effect is to realise one of those many old colour prints which set out to give an idealised setting to the social life of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The designs for the "Circular" as well as the "Square Closet" (Fig. 11) are both dated 1765, the former one having also the month, "January."

Some of the ceiling paintings of the gallery itself are rather small and somewhat too pretty in effect. The general effect of the faded pink and green of the wall decorations is very good. It must all have been immensely gay when new and fresh.

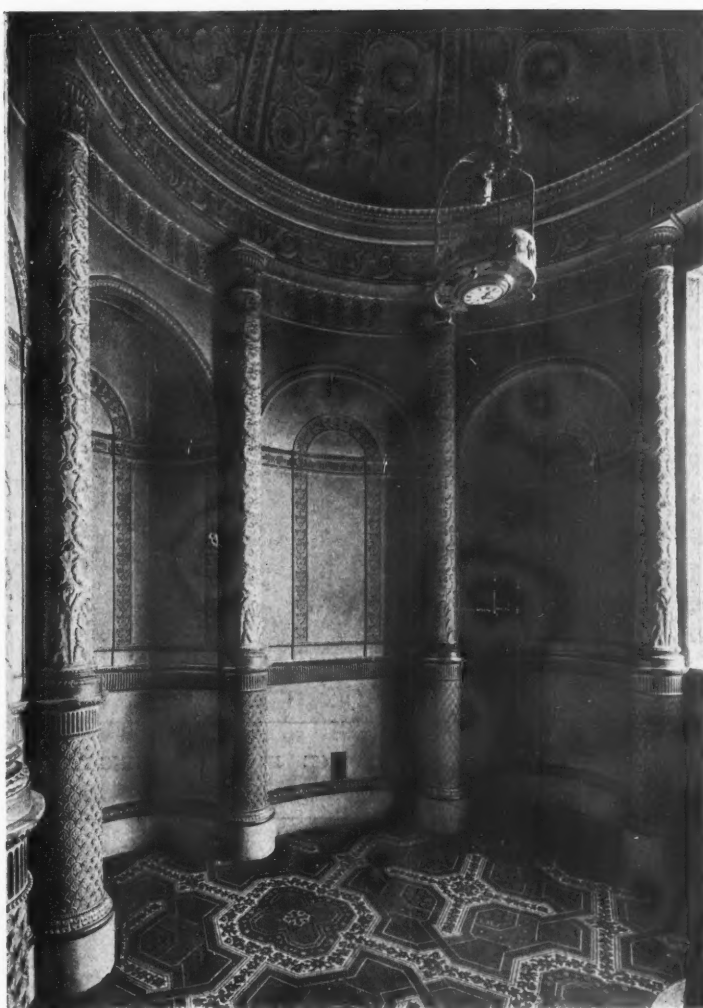
The original design for the carpet of the gallery is much finer and more architectural than



11.—THE SQUARE CLOSET.

the present one, which is probably not original. The design, not dated, "Carpet for the Gallery at Sion" shows a wide border of inner and outer fret band enclosing a guilloche. The field of the carpet is traversed with ogee lines of green, forming small flame shapes enclosing rosettes in blue and yellow on pink. The border frets are white on blue, with border lines of a strong crimson. The guilloche has a yellow ground and pink rosettes, the border lines being green and pink. The main borders running down the length of the room are connected across by bands of the "wave" pattern, enclosing a field of lozenges, green on pink. Later on Adam carpets became less definitely architectural, and flowers made their appearance.

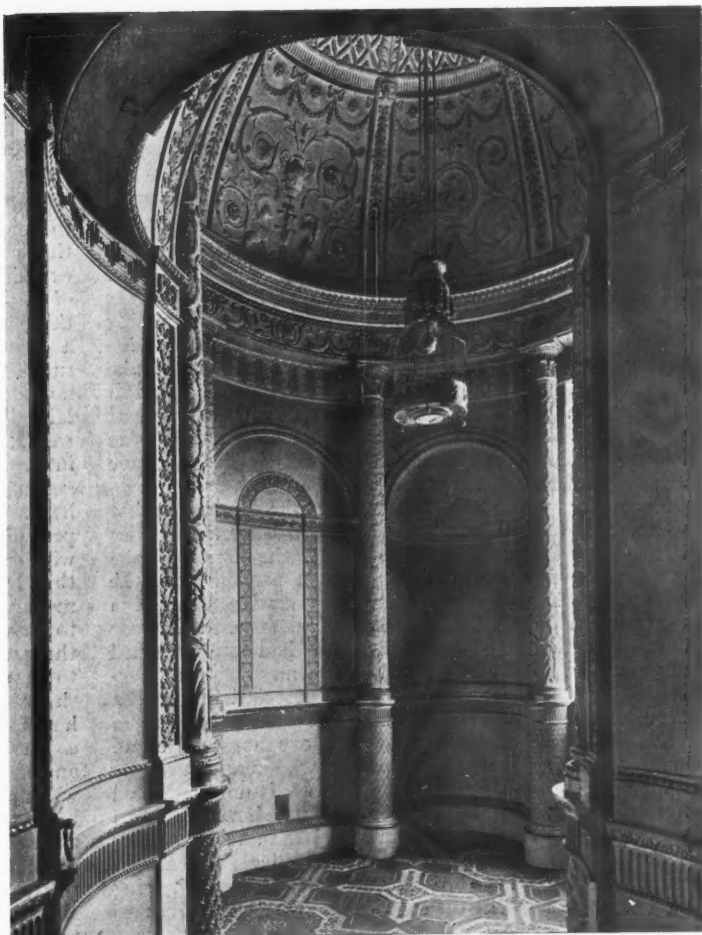
Of the furniture in this room part belongs to the crimson damask set and part to a petit point set of the time of Louis XV, which is in pale green, carved and gilt. The needlework coverings were worked in convents about 1810. Of Adam design there are two pairs of beautiful tables of marquetry with carved and fluted legs and framework. One of them has a scroll pattern working from two centres, so as to fill in the oblong shape of the top. It is inlaid in



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12.—THE ROUND CLOSET.

"C.L."



Copyright.

13.—DOORWAY OF THE ROUND CLOSET.

"C.L."



Copyright.

14.—MANTELPIECE IN THE DINING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

yellow and green on brown. The other has an all-over pattern. They are English made. Two half-circle console tables, carved and gilt, with urns worked into the bases and having the table tops of inlaid marble, are also of Adam design, as well as two long-shaped console tables, whose tops are of mosaic.

It was about this unique and masterly gallery that Horace Walpole writes to the Earl of Hertford on August 27th, 1764: "I have been this evening to Sion, which is becoming another Mount Palatine. Adam has displayed great taste and the Earl matches it with magnificence. His Gallery is converting into a museum in the style of a Columbarium according to an idea which I proposed to my Lord Northumberland." *Litera scripta manet*, and Horace stands revealed as, in *Punch's* immortal phrase, "one of those whom our artist has to put up with." ARTHUR T. BOLTON.

## GEORGE MEREDITH AT HOME

LADY BUTCHER has written an unpretentious but very charming book under the title of "Memories of George Meredith" (Constable). She tells us that once she was asked to write a magazine article on George Meredith; she thought it would amuse him to hear of it and of her refusal; he got quite warm upon the subject and exclaimed: "No, my dear! *don't do it!* You know me too well!" Then she quotes from her diary the following passage:

I promised him I would not, but, after a pause, I said to him: "I will never write about you, unless after your death some person who does not know you well should write about you unworthily so as to give a wrong impression . . . then I shall consider myself absolved from this promise and shall try my little best to tell of the 'George Meredith' as I knew him, and what his friendship has been to me." He shrugged his shoulders.

This is the only indication given that Lady Butcher has noticed the impertinent and vulgar curiosity which some writers have tried to arouse in regard to her hero. Fortunately for him, and for us too, she kept a diary during her long friendship with him, and one of the most interesting features of this book is the use made of that diary to revive memories of the simple, glad and happy home life of the great novelist. We have no hesitation in saying that a better idea can be obtained of his personality by the perusal of this simple little narrative than from all the magazine articles and books of appreciation and criticism which have been published since his death.

Meredith was under no illusion about the admiration that was expressed for the most part by a few discerning critics and a host of journalistic echoes. It is the nature of the writer for newspapers always to affect a partiality for the select. When his eyes are opened he carries admiration to the point of delirium, as he did, for instance, in the case of Edward FitzGerald. "Omar Khayyam" had been published a long time and lay neglected in the twopenny box of a bookseller when Rossetti found it, and his appreciation and that of Swinburne set the fashion which has now become so universal that the fastidious ear and eye are wearied of seeing certain lines quoted by people who really have no real appreciation of poetry. But this book is not connected with criticism in the slightest degree. It shows the man exactly as he appeared to an intimate friend. One thing at least was in Meredith's favour. He had the art of attracting and enjoying good company. He enjoyed hearing opinions contrary to his own, even when he was driven to expostulate with the speaker. A ludicrous case in point

was when Mr. FitzJames Stephen, who afterwards became Mr. Justice FitzJames Stephen, in spite of Meredith's expostulations, would persist in describing "Paradise Lost" as "the most foolish poem that ever was written." The only concession he would make about its merit was that it contained a few nice things about the devil. But the wayward charm of the notebook can best be appreciated by the sentence that follows: "Afterwards he and Mr. Meredith were very rude to each other about bottle-nosed whales." One would like to have heard his talk to young people, though his phrases want annotating. They afford some justification of the famous man who explained his neglect of Meredith by saying that he did not like to read shorthand. No one would naturally understand that "predatory pleasures" was his phrase for allowing happiness to come into one's life at the expense of others. Would the young mind fully comprehend what he meant by extolling "the blessings of celestial thwacks" to the soul of boy or girl? It will be understood that the book is something of a medley. Indeed, that is its merit, so if we select a crumb here and a crumb there, it will be impossible to run a string through them like beads of a kind. They will not fit into a continuous story. On one page he says of Miss Charlotte Yonge, "this woman does contrive dialogue well"; and writing men, at any rate, will find that very interesting indeed. On another we find him engaged in getting up Shakespeare readings. Lady Butcher as a girl had a turn for acting. On one occasion when playing the part of Gratiano in the "Merchant of Venice" she declared with such energy, "Oh! be thou *damned*, inexorable Jew," that Dr. Furnivall was at once convinced that she had the makings of a great actress. But her mother, who seems to have been a rather Victorian lady, was down at once on the gratification of any ambition of that kind. There was to be no dressing up for the Shakespeare readings, no private theatricals, nor anything that savoured of the stage. Yet how fortunate were the children to have Mr. Meredith as a coach. He had the voice, he had knowledge, sympathy, and he was as correct as Mrs. Brandreth. Meredith himself was much more Victorian than we would expect from the boldness with which he grappled with social problems even then coming to the front. It is most entertaining to read of the extraordinary trouble he took to appoint an appropriate governess to his daughter after the death of Mrs. Meredith. He thought the very greatest care should be taken with young, growing girls. Mariette was never allowed



to travel alone by train, even the very short distance from Box Hill to Ewell. A maid had always to be sent with her or to fetch her. She was never allowed to walk by herself, and he was most particular to address her letters to "c/o Mrs. J. E. H. Gordon." This is very different from the freedom girls are allowed in our day.

Lady Butcher says: "We used in our ignorance gaily to prance through the most awful passages; then Mr. Meredith would, without a smile, just take the book, pencil out the objectionable passages in the text, and say: '*Don't read that!*'" Professor Sylvester, the mathematician, joined in the Shakespeare readings of "As You Like It," and as a result printed three hundred odd lines to rhyme with Rosalind. Meredith, who had started this game, wrote his comment to Mrs. Brandreth:

After three nights of anxious thought!—and it may be communicated to the Professor—if you think fit.

"Now so richly *Sylvestrined*  
Here's the last word to Rosalind."

His judgment of character was very shrewd. Lady Butcher says that of a little lady whom they knew he said:

"She is a woman who has never had the first tadpole wriggle of an idea,"

but he owned that "she has a mind as clean and white and flat as plate," (and added thoughtfully) "there are no eminences in it."

The following was a good summary, and we would like to have seen and heard him at the fancy dress ball where a learned professor had resolved to be present.

The dear old Professor has but three hairs, which float over his venerable shoulders when he attends scientific gatherings, when I am informed he looks massive and dignified, but Mrs. Brandreth gives a fancy dress ball and lo! behold! the three hairs are jauntily brushed up over his bald pate. He trips forth as a cavalier of the time of Charles II! His form—his form dear! is clad in pale mauve satin, and lace ruffles! Mr. Meredith, convulsed with mirth till the tears ran down his cheeks, kept exclaiming between shouts of laughter: "His form! Pale mauve satin and lace ruffles! His form!"

There is much we would like to say that must be left unsaid; in particular, there is the visit of R. L. Stevenson to Box Hill, and the interesting reference to many other men who have become famous. We would have liked also to quote the amusing doggerel which Meredith wrote on very slight provocation, but instead let us end with the lines that he thought his best and that are now engraved on his tomb:

Our life is but a little holding, lent  
To do a mighty labour: we are one  
With Heaven and the stars, when it is spent,  
To serve God's aim.

## A TREE THAT HELPED TO WIN THE WAR

By A. E. SHIPLEY, MASTER OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

**S**CATTERED through the coastal regions of the West Indies and many parts of tropical America is a tree whose wood has helped to win the war. Its scientific name is *Ochroma lagopus*, and it belongs to the silk cotton family *Bombacaceæ*. In Jamaica it is known as the "down tree," and in Spanish America as "corcho." It grows to a height of 40ft. to 60ft., and is sometimes as much

91lb. per cubic foot. Its relative specific gravity as compared with true cork is as 0.120 to 0.240. In spite of its lightness, tests show that balsa wood is fully one-half as strong as white spruce. It is an excessively quick grower, sometimes growing from a seed in the course of twelve months to a tree of the height of 36ft., and in five or six years a tree of 2ft. to 2½ft. in diameter can be produced. Balsa wood was used in the construction of aeroplanes and hydro-aeroplanes, especially by the American and Italian Governments. After the *Titanic* disaster attention was drawn to life-saving appliances at sea, and the American company who were developing the balsa interests built up a series of lifebuoys or rafts, large elliptical rings of an astonishing buoyancy. Over 70,000 of these floats were supplied to the Naval Department of the United States, and before the war was ended a thousand a day were being turned out from the factories. As the writer in the *Bulletin of the American International Corporation* tells us, "it is now known that the 250 mile 'mine barrage' across the North Sea was largely made possible by the use of these buoys, which were the only type of float which could withstand the long submersion and the crushing effect of depth charges." Captain R. B. Belknap, U.S.N., tells us that the Germans admit the loss of twenty-three submarines in this "barrage," which was thirty miles in width and contained over 70,000 mines.

Balsa wood is also used for insulating purposes, and doubtless now the War is over this will prove of great commercial value. It is also wonderfully elastic. A 3in. cube of balsa timber under a load of some 8,000lb. to 10,000lb. will be compressed to a cube of half an inch, but on the pressure being diminished it almost immediately returns to a height of 2ins., and the elasticity does not seem to diminish with repeated compression.

The illustrations are from the *Bulletin of the American International Corporation*, February, 1919.



A BALSA GROVE IN COSTA RICA THREE YEARS AFTER PLANTING.

as 6ft. in circumference. It grows very rapidly and, like other tropical trees, it grows all the time, so that there are no rings to show its age. The trunk increases in diameter about 5ins. each year, so that a tree from 24ins. to 30ins. across can be "raised" in five to six years. The wood is very soft and homogeneous, and somewhat silky to the touch. It can be easily indented by a finger-nail. A six months old seedling is taller than a man, and the leaves are sometimes 2ft. or 3ft. across, but they diminish in size as the tree gets older. During the third year the tree develops conspicuous green buds, from which emerge light yellow or white blossoms. From these a pod about an inch in diameter and 6ins. or 8ins. long develops, and in the pod between the seeds is an enormous quantity of golden brown cotton, hence its common name, which is used by the natives for stuffing cushions, pillows and mattresses. As a rule the tree grows in cleared areas of the forest, and is what is known as a "second-growth" tree. Untreated the wood decays rather rapidly and gradually absorbs water, but Colonel R. A. Marr, of Norfolk, Virginia, has invented a process by which decay is prevented and the wood is rendered waterproof.

The real interest of the treated balsa wood lies in its extraordinary lightness. A dried cubic foot of balsa wood weighs only 7.3lb., whereas a similar volume of cork weighs 13.7lb. A cubic foot of white spruce weighs 23lb., and one of the heavier timbers of the tropics, the quebracho, weighs



A BALSA LIFE RAFT SUPPORTING TWENTY-TWO PEOPLE.



# LETTERS TO YOUNG SPORTSMEN

ON HUNTING.—VI. BY LIEUT.-COLONEL J. MACKILLOP.

It seems to me, on looking over earlier letters, that you may with some justice charge me with putting things a bit out of their place. I have talked about riding to hounds and performing all sorts of valiant feats, and then here I am tamely harking back to the rudiments of the business. But I do not mind admitting that there was a little method in this upside-down process. If I had inflicted you with all this dull stuff at first, you might not have stuck to me till I had reached the more advanced stage, so I tried to fire your ardour and so coax you along with me.

It is inculcated into the cavalry recruit that the horse must be his friend and that in dealing with horses it is mutual confidence which makes mutual good will. Intelligence is fostered by an absence of fear. A horse is highly strung, and if treated with kindness is capable of splendid effort and much intelligence, but if knocked about soon becomes a dangerous brute or sullen clod. So get on good



*You never need girth very tight if the horse is of a good shape.*

terms with every horse you ride. Look round to see that all is right with the gear, the bridle and saddle fitting properly and the girths fairly tight—not too tight. You can hitch them up a hole or two later on when you have gone a mile or two. If you try to do it before you start the horse blows himself out and will not let you. You never need girth very tight if the horse is of a good shape. Before you mount take the reins and whip all in the left hand. Never mount with the whip in the right hand, because the horse, if nervous, will imagine as you swing over the saddle that you are going to hit him. Tighten the off-rein so that the horse may not browse off your nether garments. Sometimes a snappy horse does this and it is no joke. Stand facing the horse's tail with your left shoulder against his near shoulder. If he has a mane, grasp it with your left hand; if he has not, grip his neck in front of the withers. With the right hand give the iron a turn from left to right and put in the foot. Make the horse stand still. Nothing is so annoying as a horse that moves away as soon as you put your foot in the stirrup. Hop once on the right foot, turn the body facing the saddle and seize it at the back or cantle. The left knee—and this is the important point—should be pressed against the saddle-flap to keep the toe from digging into the horse's ribs. Spring off the right foot and help yourself up by the cantle. Pause a second while standing in the stirrup and drop lightly, not soss, into the saddle. Turn the right toe inwards and pick up the stirrup. Never bend down and grope with the hand for the iron; this is just the time a fresh horse may buck or plunge, and if you are half off, feeling for the stirrup, he shovels you off altogether.

If the leather is turned the right way it lies smoothly up the inside of the shin. If you find difficulty in getting the foot into the stirrup, twist the leather a few times from left to right before mounting and then it will hang in such a position as to meet the toe. The length of the leather always seems a great difficulty with beginners. Personally, I fancy leathers rather longer than shorter. If a man is round in the thighs and thick in the calf he will want his leathers on the short side. If his thighs are long he will sit comfortably if the leathers are long enough to allow the fork to clear the pommel of the saddle when he stands up in the stirrups with the feet thrust right home. If a horse is a bit "roached backed" and very strong behind the saddle the stirrups will have to be a bit shorter than with a horse with fine withers and a hollowish back. Flat racing jockeys have adopted a seat like a frog on a shovel, which may suit them possibly well enough in flat races, where they go at top pace all through and hang like grim death on to their horses' mouths, but they are helpless if a horse bucks or plunges. I fancy if Fordham, Harry Custance or Fred Archer were alive they would still head the list of winning jockeys without adopting this American seat. Steeplechase jockeys ride longer, but not so long as the hunting seat. A steeplechase, is an effort sustained but for a short time, and I notice cross-country jockeys ride fairly long out hunting. The great thing is to acquire a seat independent altogether of the reins. If you want to get a secure seat and strengthen the riding muscles practice riding without stirrups; trot a little without them every day and keep your balance without any assistance from the bridle. You can only do it by gripping with the thighs, not the calves, and keeping the heels down and toes up. Riding home from hunting at a walk, kick the feet out of the stirrups and cover some distance without them. You will soon feel you are getting into the right place in the saddle.

There are some riders who stick on as if nailed to the saddle, by sheer strength of grip and haul the horse about by force of arm. They turn a well mannered, generous horse into a sulky puller in no time. What is wanted is a firm, yet pliant, seat in the middle of the saddle, with heel, knee and shoulder in more or less one upright line. If you sit too far back, out go your legs like the shafts of a cart, and the pressure of the leg behind the girth cannot be applied as it should be for almost everything you want a horse to do. Men on horses retain the pigskin in the most remarkable positions. They ride all their lives in these postures, which are so weird that it would seem almost impossible to get into, much less maintain. If the body is thrown too far forward, that is, on to the fork, it is obvious that the man is half way over the horse's head already and a peck or stumble shoots him up its neck or off over its shoulder. Sit with the body well poised over the hips or, if anything, slightly back, with as much of the thigh touching the saddle as possible. Screw yourself into the saddle, as it were. You can feel yourself doing it quite well, especially on the way home from hunting, when the limbs are relaxed. From the knee downward



*Men on horses retain the pigskin in the most remarkable positions.*

the leg covers the girth; the body free, not resisting the movements of the horse. Drawing back the leg from the knee downwards you press the horse behind the girth, but only just behind it, to urge him forward, to keep him up to his bridle or to see he does not shuffle off a fence when you



*At a jump the shorter his strides the better effort he can make.*

present him at it. The elbows should not be "akimbo," but should hang loosely from the shoulder, free to move backward and forward so as not to have a dead, heavy feel on the horse's mouth. Try to ride with long reins, the hands almost touching the bottom button of the coat. If the horse shoves out his nose, do not scramble up the reins and dig your heels into his ribs. Drop the hands and feel the horse with the legs below the knee. If a horse jumps aside, as a fresh one will if a bird flies out of the hedge, do not clutch at the reins; move with him and sit still.

Haute Ecole riding is a much more scientific business. It is very clever, and, if anyone has grasped the principles, is an advantage in ordinary riding, but not worth the trouble of learning as far as hunting is concerned. When hacking, ride with the toe in the stirrup, keeping it there by sinking the heel and pressing on the ball of the foot. You have the elasticity of the ankle to assist in taking the bump when trotting, and also the leg, with the foot with the toe in the stirrup, is in a better position to apply the "aid" just behind the girth. For hunting push the foot home in the iron, but keep the toe up; if you let it point down, it throws the whole body off the balance. Also, by keeping the heel down you are able to "feel" the waist at the small of the back, which brings the body on the proper part of the anatomy to meet the saddle. Do not be sure you have acquired a seat independent of the reins till you have tried jumping a few fences with the reins knotted on the horse's neck. In trotting keep the horse well up to his bridle by occasional leg pressure behind the girths. Let him trot deliberately and well within himself; do not haul yourself up to meet the bumps, or rise in the stirrups by your own effort. Let the action of the horse lift your weight. Some smooth-actioned horses hardly move us in the saddle, others provide a good deal of the cup and ball business. A good horseman soon accommodates himself to any action, to outward appearances, though some horses are always very uncomfortable in their trot, while, maybe, they move well at a gallop. Do not try to start a horse from a standstill to a trot or a trot to a canter by "clucking" or chirping; it is amateurish, and these weird noises not only affect your own horse, but also all others near. A feel on the horse's mouth, a slight closing of the legs, are all that is needed. In riding at a fence you must not pull the horse at the critical moment. Fancy jumping, yourself, with a string tied to your collar, which someone chucked just as you were taking off. Keep a strongish, even hold of the reins and a firm pressure with both legs, but do not tighten the reins convulsively

as the horse nears the fence or as he rises to it. There is no fault as bad as refusing. It utterly upsets the timid, and certainly damps the ardour of the bold rider. It loses one's place in a run, and instead of having fences to jump without the crowd, one finds oneself jostling in the ruck. A horse will soon know if you mean business. If you "throw your heart over first," he will not think of refusing. It is the firm clasp of the legs and the even feel of the mouth that make him go. The important thing is to make the horse jump where you put him, not swerving and jumping wherever he likes. Remember that at a jump the shorter his last few strides the better effort he can make. Gauge the ground with your eye, and try to show the horse by a quick squeeze of the legs where he should take off. If he takes off too far away from a fence, it means you lose that distance on the other side. If the horse is going collectedly, his hind legs are under him, and he will deal with any unseen difficulty on the other side of a fence.

We have had to do, up to now, with the nice, free, good-natured horse, but the time will come when you will have to ride the ill-mannered, shifty and "nappy" animal. If you are sure, and be *sure*, the horse understands what you want him to do and will not do it because he is suffering from illness or obstinacy and needs punishing, let him have it, but before you start be sure you mean to win. Do not work yourself into a temper. Keep cool and put it across him. Rearing is a bad fault and one is rather helpless, because the horse may lose his balance and fall back on one. Do not pull on the reins. Catch the mane or pommel of the saddle and clip him a sharp one between the ears with the whip, not the heavy handle, or you may injure the horse. If the horse paws the air he has got his balance, but if he stops doing so and his legs hang down, he has lost his balance and may come over. Slip your feet out of the stirrups and shift for yourself. Bucking is awkward and may be caused by a cold saddle being put on the horse's back. Do not get on this horse in the stable yard. Walk him half a mile and get on then. If he bucks and there is plenty of room, gallop him; he cannot buck and gallop at the same time. Keep a horse's head up if he bucks; he cannot give a real big buck unless he gets his head down. But a real good buckner will grass you sooner or later. As he gallops give him one or two good strokes down the shoulders. If a horse runs away, try to pull him round either way. He cannot go far with his head on one side. If he can be steadied, keep him galloping, and as he has gone some distance for his own amusement, let him do a bit for yours, preferably in a deep ploughed field. Give him one or two good "rib binders" with a cut whip. He will soon want to stop, but send him on till he wishes he had never started. A "nappy" horse is one which will not leave the stable or, if he has got away, wants to come back. This is often caused by being exercised in a field, round and round, near his stable. If he is bad and you cannot cure him, the only way is to ride him some distance with another horse alongside him and when he has got away from familiar surroundings he may go all right. With a refuser the spurs are the best



*With a refuser the spurs are the best punishment.*

punishment, because if you leave go of his head to hit him just as he approaches the fence he will swing round. But give him a couple of sharp digs, low down, just as he is about twenty feet from the fence. Do not begin a battle with a horse which is vicious unless you are prepared to see it through; remember, if he beats you now he has beaten you for all time.



## THE ESTATE MARKET

## "SCOTLAND IS CHANGING HANDS"

THROUGHOUT the year there has been "considerable liveliness" in the market for Scottish properties, and now, as the year draws to its close, a remarkable volume of landed property north of the Tweed is being announced for sale. In all directions agents are busy with preparations for offering large estates in the coming season, and this section of the market seems likely to be very noteworthy in the early months of 1920.

The trustees of the late Mr. Archibald Mackenzie have instructed Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley to offer by auction early next season the residential estate of Milliken, in the County of Renfrew, about ten miles by road from Glasgow. The estate extends to about 447 acres and includes Milliken House, with beautiful gardens, laid out by the Napiers of Milliken, and a second residence known as the White House.

The late Mr. James Campbell's trustees have determined to dispose of the residential and sporting estate of Tullichewan, Dumbartonshire. The property will be offered next season by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley, unless previously sold by private treaty. The estate, south of Loch Lomond, is about 1,033 acres in extent. Tullichewan Castle and Moor, Woodbank House and Broomley House are included.

The trustees of the late Mr. J. C. Cuninghame, Craigends, are selling Dunragit, Wigtownshire, and have instructed Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley to offer the estate for sale by auction early next season. There is exclusive salmon and sea trout fishing in the River Luce, with net fishing in the sea, and grouse and low ground shooting. The estate of over 7,400 acres includes Dunragit House, overlooking Luce Bay, and twenty farms.

Mr. W. A. Bankier has decided to dispose of Dunlossit, in the Island of Islay, and has placed the estate in the hands of Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley for this purpose. The estate extends to 18,457 acres and includes the Mansion House, which has a magnificent outlook across the Sound of Islay. Salmon and sea trout fishing, stalking, grouse and winter shooting provide sport almost the whole year round.

## COOMBE PARK, OXON.

Coombe Park, Oxfordshire, will be submitted early next year as a whole, and, if not so sold, then in lots, by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley, in association with Messrs. Simmons and Sons. The property has a long frontage to the Thames opposite Pangbourne, and extends to 1,045 acres, and it comprises part of the village of Whitchurch.

Lord Vernon has instructed Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley to sell the Poynton estate, Cheshire, midway between Macclesfield and Stockport, extending to 1,400 acres.

The Quantock Lodge estate, Somersetshire, is to be sold, by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley. The house was built by the late Mr. R. T. Labouchere in 1857—a noble mansion of stone. The estate, famed for its herd of "Wild Red Deer," which are now regularly hunted, extends to 2,500 acres.

## HERON COURT SALES.

Some hundreds of acres of the Heron Court estate were sold by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley, before the auction, which was held this week at Bournemouth.

## DONNINGTON CASTLE, BERKSHIRE.

Little more than 250 years ago the pleasant and now peaceful neighbourhood of Newbury reverberated with a merciless cannonade, and Donnington Castle, overlooking the Lambourn near its confluence with the Kennet, was being slowly but surely reduced to ruins by the Parliamentarians, under one Dalbier. With what zest he did the destruction can only be inferred from the fact that, wherever they went, the adherents of Cromwell wantonly destroyed, defaced and desecrated buildings without regard to military necessities. But the reduction and capture of Donnington was a military measure of urgent importance. After the battle of Newbury, in 1643, Donnington was garrisoned by order of the King, as it commanded the road from London to the west. In 1644 Middleton's 4,000 men were repulsed by the commandant of the castle, John Boys (who was knighted for his success). Brown, Governor of Abingdon, met with a like disastrous failure. Reinforcements were sent up, and, for nineteen days, a bombardment took place at close range. In its course 1,000 rounds were fired. A compiler of a history of the castle finds it hard to resist the temptation to compare this fire, in its intensity, with what he has assisted to deliver in Flanders, but it must be borne in mind that the defenders found the old-time fire quite heavy enough, and the arrival of the King and the relief of the castle was as welcome as any similar event ever has been. We could go on recording the fortunes of the fortress, but it must suffice to say that in 1646 Dalbier forced Boys to

surrender, but that the defenders were accorded the honours of war, and that they were allowed to leave with drums beating and flags flying, should be remembered to the credit of the Cromwellians—and, as we have often had to print out, they can do with a word or two of something praiseworthy. The present writer may be forgiven for remarking that he is quite impartial, as his ancestors were represented in both sides in the Civil War.

We need say no more about the fighting, except that it left the castle a ruin, and its stones were largely incorporated in the mansion, known as Donnington Castle House, which was soon afterwards erected on a site close by. The ruins are still of impressive grandeur, and must ever be most venerable as reminders of the troublous period which, it seems strange to think, is but 250 years ago.

## MEMORIES OF THE ARMADA.

Sir Richard de Abberbury rebuilt the castle in 1385, and he is also notable as the guardian of Richard II in his minority. One, Chaucer, bought the castle from him for a thousand marks in silver. Camden connects the immortal Chaucer with the castle, saying that "It was the house of Geoffrey Chaucer, and there under an oak (commonly called Chaucer's oak) he is said to have penned many of his poems." It afterwards vested in the Crown, and Queen Elizabeth granted Donnington Castle to Lord Howard of Effingham, by Letters Patent of May 15th, 1600, for defeating the Spanish Armada:

"He did render very great services to us and our Kingdom, with our ships and our Royal Fleet; and did with our armament in the year of our Lord 1588, and of our reign the thirtieth, under our auspices and the favour of God, conquer in an open naval battle the Spanish Fleet prepared to invade our Kingdom."

Messrs. Nicholas have been instructed to dispose of the property, over 312 acres, including Donnington Castle House and park, manorial rights in Snelsmore, and the patronage of almshouses founded by Richard de Abberbury in 1392. It is interesting to note that the estate is now changing hands for the first time since the grant to the victor over the Armada.

## HAIG OF BEMERSYDE.

By a natural and happy coincidence the fact may be noted that an option to buy Bemersyde, near Melrose, has been acquired, with a view to the presentation of the house to Field-Marshal Lord Haig, one of the latest and most eminent of these whose genius and valour have saved the Empire from deadly peril. But, as this is elsewhere referred to, there is no occasion to say more about the project here.

## ACTIVITY IN PRIVATE TREATY.

The gardens designed by Miss Jekyll are a feature which helped to bring about the prompt sale of Coneyhurst, Ewhurst, through Messrs. Alex. H. Turner and Co., for £5,300.

Another excellent country property, Cove House, Ashten Keynes, an old Cotswold manor in Wiltshire, has been sold by Messrs. Whatley Hill and Co. Originally it belonged to the Duke of Cleveland, and Mr. Hay Drummond added the fine modern range of stabling there.

Among the many private sales by Messrs. Hampton and Sons, in the last few days, may be mentioned, Osney Lodge and 72 acres at South Godstone, Surrey; Elderslie, Eden Park, Kent, and over 5 acres; Rosebank and an acre at Hatfield; and Toutley Hall, Wokingham, a modernised Georgian house, and about 14 acres. They have also sold No. 9, Cleveland Row, St. James's, for £4,550, and, privately, the Norman Shaw house, No. 35, Harrington Gardens, and, in conjunction with Messrs. White, Berry and Taylor, No. 55, Eaton Place, Belgrave.

Messrs. Denyer and Rumball issue, as their "review of the year," a very long list of the chief country properties which they have succeeded in selling in the past twelve months in the Wealden district of Kent and Sussex, with some very good properties elsewhere.

A nice little freehold of 4 acres at Downton has been privately sold by Messrs. Edwin Fear and Walker, who have disposed of another of like size in Surrey, known as The Sundial. Little Bookham, a place laid out as a miniature estate, with singular effectiveness.

Private sales of houses by Messrs. Maple and Co. include Quarrenden, West Malling, and 7 acres; Furze Court and 4 acres at Patcham, near Brighton; The Plantation and 7 acres at Ingatstone; Mill House and a like area of land at Malden; Rydes Hill House near Guildford; Teigngrace, Enfield; Highfield, Bushey Heath; Charlwood House and 15 acres at Herley; the Italian villa and 15 acres known as Juniper Hill, Walton Heath; Oakhurst and Dunheved, Caterham, as well as other properties of the same description.

# CORRESPONDENCE

## GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS SEVENTY YEARS AGO.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The older I grow the more do I note the difference between the way in which Christmas was kept seventy years ago and the way it is now kept—I mean in the preparations for its keeping—and so have made some notes on the way in which the various rites were observed in a village whose inhabitants were four or five farmers and some 250 other inhabitants all told. It all depended upon the weather and an obliging moon. No sooner had the last phase of the October moon passed than preparations were begun for the November Christmas-pig killing, and it was deemed of the utmost importance that pigs must be killed in a waxing moon or else the bacon and hams when boiled would not "rise"—that is, swell in the pot—while on the other hand, if the pig was killed on a waning moon the meat would shrink or "suerr up." Most villages had a farrier pig doctor, who was also the local pig-sticker. As a rule, the farmers had the first turn in the killing, the cottagers next; and it was not possible to do all the killing on a waxing moon, so some had it done on a waning moon, and it was always to build up the belief that the moon had "to do" with the rising or shrinking in the pot. While the moon waxed the pig killer had a busy time, and as every cottager had a fat Christmas pig to kill, the "sticker" had often a dozen pigs to kill one day and as many to cut up the next day. It was then the regular custom for the owner of each pig to send out a plateful of pig's fry to his best neighbours. It was a wife's job to make ready the plates, and children carried out the plates, each covered with a white clean napkin, and each child was told to bring the plates and cloths unwashed, for it was held that if the plates came back clean neither the bacon sides nor the hams would take salt and so would not cure. The pig cutting up produced pork sides, chops and hams and was a time of much stress during the curing weeks, for each and every day the sides had to be turned and re-rubbed with saltpetre, salt and sugar until the flesh took the mixture. Most cottages held a curing slab of wood or stone, and in my own home we cured four flitches and four hams at the same time. For a time the whole village lived upon pork and pig-trimmings, and every spare moment was spent in cutting up pork for pies and minced meats of sorts, and the pig's leaves of fat were cut up into square cubes to melt down on the fire in pans or in the oven to render into seam (otherwise lard), and a good fat pig would fill a bladder and several jars with the best of seam, and the residue as "scratchings" or "cracklings" provided a good, if luscious, meal to children for days. Then ensued strenuous days in making pork mince and other pies, and the whole village smelt and tasted Christmas for more than a week. Many of the house dams built up the pork piecrusts into shape, and half-baked them in the oven one day and the next day filled them with meat, put a lid crust on and then gave them a proper and thorough baking to finish them, and these were good to eat six months later. But the pig killed had other duties to perform. The head was, in most cases, roasted for either the Christmas Eve supper or the Christmas Day dinner, and often a six or seven weeks' old sucking pig was roasted whole instead of the pig's head, and there is not a better dish at Christmas than roast sucking pig and its trimmings. Most farmers kept a few turkeys, but roast goose was the more common dish, and nearly all cottagers had a couple of ducks, or fowls, or chine of pork or a piece of beef, with puddings and pies in Christmas week. It was a general time of getting ready and feasting in every house. Farmer and cottar alike helped the widow and the poorest home, so that once in the year there was no real want. The widow got her dole without asking, and some drinkables as well. On Christmas Eve and Day all tables were loaded with good Christmas cheer, and the drinkables ranged from small beer, strong old ale, to compounds known as ale and wines, posset mulled ales and wines to "egg flip," which consisted of eggs whisked into compounds of ale or wines and spiced. All houses were busy with other preparations, of which the making of the "kissing bush" or "bunch" was of great importance. It took a couple of weeks to make and finish before it was hung to the main beam of the living-room of farm or cottage. The best "bush" was made of a young fir tree head, the top cut out so as to allow the longer boughs to hang down when inverted. In the hollow was fixed a couple of hooks crossed, and in the hollow was swung a "cratch" containing a doll to represent the infant Jesus set about with smaller dolls as angels, and the bows of the hoops were decked with holly and other emblems of the season, coloured papers, tinsel oranges, apples, and other fruits, and below all hung a piece of mistletoe. Here all the forfeits in the games were redeemed. The most popular games were Turn Trencher, Hunt the Slipper and Kiss in the Ring, and all round were delightful romps in Christmas week and days after. No wonder Christmas was the feast holiday of the year, and all the villagers took part in it.—THOMAS RATCLIFFE.

## A DOG'S LOSS OF MEMORY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A somewhat strange case of aberration and apparent loss of memory on the part of a dog recently came under my observation. A black retriever, which had always been most intelligent and obedient, disappeared from its home. As he had been absent previously, more than once for several days at a time, little anxiety was felt at first; but when over a week had passed the dog was advertised for, though without result. Before disappearing he had been accustomed to visiting, very frequently, three places—his own home, a house a mile away, and a shop between the two, and—as an instance of his obedience—

he would carry a bone wrapped in paper between the two houses, and refrain from touching it until he arrived and received permission to eat it. After the lapse of a month the animal walked into the shop with an air of great dejection and in very bad condition, his hair being dirty and ragged. His collar was gone, and in its place was a broken string. The dog seemed to recognise its owner, but without any enthusiasm, and with an appearance of apprehension which was puzzling. It followed him home, but remained dispirited, and could not be induced to perform several little tricks he had formerly always done with alacrity, such as drinking from a running pipe "dying for his country," etc. His memory for these things seemed quite gone. He showed some irritability, and was so ill-tempered and snarling when a neighbour's dog—with which he had formerly been very friendly—appeared, that they had to be kept separate. Altogether, the animal was so changed that the owner would have been very doubtful as to its being his, had it not been for the identifying of a scar beside one eye where it had been torn by a cat. At the end of a week he again went off, and was met on the road by a person he had formerly known well, and had a great affection for. But the mental disorder had returned, and he avoided all approaches with a wild look, and nervous movements, though all the time he seemed to be searching for someone by the way he sniffed at passing strangers. Ultimately he disappeared, but returned home at night, with the demented appearance again diminished; but the owner has decided to have him destroyed as unsafe.—C.

## THE MOLE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—*A propos* the letter in your issue of November 29th on the profits of mole-catching, I should like to tell you of a mole I came across this summer. While gathering flowers at dusk, at 10 p.m. on June 11th, I heard the sound of the nibbling of a succulent plant close at hand, and about 2yds. from me saw a mole in the middle of the path, intent on eating what appeared to be a dandelion plant. It ate with energy and at intervals tried to burrow with its nose in the hard path, which, however, was too stony for it. I decided to kill it, and went into the house and got an axe. It was still busily at work on my return, but showed so small a sense of sport that I had not the heart to hit it, but instead hammered the ground with the axe close to its head and shuffled on the ground with my feet, hoping to make it run, but it took not the slightest notice of either me or my weapon and continued its meal with vigour. I concluded that it must be both deaf and blind, but I see that the books say that the hearing of the mole is exceptionally acute. This case, I think, must have been an exception.—E. WIMBUSH.

## A RECIPE FOR HOME-CURED BACON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As an unflinching subscriber for your paper, I wonder if you could get me a really good recipe for home-cured bacon through its pages. We find the hams satisfactory, but the bacon is too salt and hard. It has, of course, to keep well for at least nine months.—LAND GIRL.

[The following is a recipe for curing bacon in the Devonshire way given by a well known authority. Ingredients for the rubbing: To every pound of meat allow 2oz. of saltpetre, 2oz. of salt prunella, 1lb. of common salt. For the pickle: three gallons of water, 5lb. of common salt, 7lb. of coarse sugar, 3lb. of baysalt. Weigh the sides, and to every 14lb. allow the above ingredients. Pound and mix these together and rub well into the meat; lay it in a stone trough or tub, rubbing it well and turning it for two days. Then pour on it a pickle made as follows: Put the above into a saucepan and boil for fifteen minutes, stirring frequently. Remove the scum and pour hot over the meat. Let the meat be rubbed and turned daily. If the meat is small, a fortnight will be sufficient time for it to remain in the pickle; if 30lb. or upwards, three weeks will be required. On taking the bacon out, let it drain for twenty-four hours and then cover with bran—smoke or not as desired.—ED.]

## OLD ENGLISH MAPS AND MAP MAKERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In my article on "Old English Maps and Their Makers" in COUNTRY LIFE of November 29th I gave some little account of John Speed, whose beautiful series of maps was published in 1611. I have since come across this picture of him which you may like to see. There is also an interesting monument to him in the chancel of St. Giles Cripplegate, upon which is the following inscription: "John Speed, who was bred a Tailor, was by the generosity of Sir Fulk Grevil, his patron, set free from a manual employment, & enabled to pursue his studies, to which he was strongly inclined, by the bent of his genius. The fruits of them were his Theatre of Great Britain, containing an entire set of maps of the counties drawn by himself, his History of Great Britain, richly adorned with seals, coins and medals, from the Cotton collection; and his Genealogies of Scripture, first bound up with the Bible in 1611, which was the first edition of the present English translation. His maps were very justly esteemed; and his History of Great Britain, was, in its kind incomparably more complete, than all the histories of his predecessors put together. He died the 28 of July 1629 having had twelve sons and six daughters by one wife."—PRESCOTT ROWE.



JOHN SPEED, THE MAP MAKER.





IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK.

## BIGHORN SHEEP.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I hope you may care to see this remarkable group of Bighorn sheep, which looks, I think, as if it might have been moulded in bronze. This picture was taken in the Rocky Mountains National Park of Canada, within a few miles of the town of Banff, Alberta, and it shows how tame these beautiful animals have become under the rigid protection afforded them by the Government in the park.—G. W.

## INDIAN BAMBOO INDUSTRIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Some time ago I sent you a photograph illustrating the manner in which Indian bamboos are made up into tent poles. I now enclose a photograph of a minor industry connected with the bamboo. The first shows a basket-maker at work. Just recovering from an attack of influenza, he has tied his head up in a duster, an Indian remedy for all sorts of diseases.—H. L. W.



AN INDIAN BASKET MAKER.

I thought that perhaps he saw his reflection in the looking-glass in the side-board on the opposite side of the room, so I lowered the blind, but it made no difference. He went to another window close by, and I saw him scramble against the glass *upwards* all the way from the bottom to the division of the window, *ryd. 4ins.*, by using his wings. He returned early the next morning and continued incessantly to peck at the pane and to throw himself against it. At luncheon our maid rushed suddenly to the window, flapping her white apron, and he flew away and did not return. We have had robins since, but whether that one or not I could not say. Can anyone explain his curious conduct?—GERTRUDE A. FRYER.

## A DISTURBING ROBIN.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—For several winters I have put food for the birds on a wall-stand just outside our dining-room window, and many blue-tits and greenfinches come for it. There used to be several great-tits, now we see them only occasionally. Sometimes one or two robins visit the feeding-board. About three weeks ago a robin rested on the vine just outside the middle window and kept pecking at the glass with his beak and flying against the pane. He kept this up continuously for several hours. I

## ANOTHER ACCOMMODATING DONKEY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have just seen your picture of kids on a donkey's back in your issue of November 22nd. Here is another picture, a kid and a donkey too, as some say.—B. D. B. W.

## THE ELM TREE.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—In the last paragraph of Country Notes of October 4th—which, by the way, owing to the Railway Strike did not reach me till a month late—the elm as a useful wood is "let down" considerably and, I consider, unduly. I have lived in an elm-producing forest and have met with many woodmen and woodworkers, and all of them have a good word for the "elum," as they mostly call it. According to their way of putting it, there are forty kinds of elm, but

I should take it they mean that number of uses to which it can be applied. When sawn into planks a most beautiful "grain and flower" is shown, the "flower" being the varied markings. Another term for grain and flower is "bale and bastard," which I do not understand. The wood when at its best is known as "bow elm," because of spring and elasticity, and many wood-craftsmen hold that the old English bow was made of elm, hence bow elm. Bow elm is of the most commercial value in making the bows, arms, backs and spindles of chairs and other joinery work. When boiled or steamed it becomes as malleable almost as iron, and can be bent and twisted into any shape and remain so when dried, nor will the wood warp when well cured. Its other main use is in making the faves of wheels, hence "ray elm"; into the faves the spokes are put and the felloes of the wheel or outer rim are also made of elm, giving the wood another name as "felley elm." In bending the "flower" and "bastard" are made with the grain showing uppermost, and is known as the warp and woof. "Bow elm" is the elm from youth to middle age, and "nav elm" when the elm is fully grown and becomes so hard that rails are difficult to drive into it. In fact, to the woodman and woodworker there is no wood like "elum" wood. To wind up, there are male and female elmwood, the male close fibre and more teracious, the female softer and pliable, which may imply the fully matured wood and the other the still growing wood. These notes are only part of what may be written of the elm and its merits.—JUBA.



THE MAN LADEN WITH MISCHIEF.

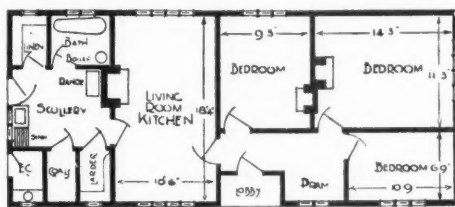
# COTTAGE BUILDING WITHOUT BRICKS

## III.—WOODEN HOUSES.

**D**URING the past few months we have heard a great deal about wooden houses, and some most exaggerated statements have been made—particularly in regard to cost of construction. The agitation, however, although reckless, and probably having political discomfiture as its chief aim, has at least served to focus attention on timber building as one of the possible alternatives to brick building for the new cottages; and now we have before us the studied efforts of quite half a dozen large firms who have made arrangements for the mass production of wooden houses. It is only on this basis of mass production that such construction can be seriously considered, because only by this means is it possible to get standard houses for quick delivery and speedy erection. Among the firms is Messrs. Boulton and Paul, who, on a site a few miles out of Norwich, have erected the specimen wooden house which is here illustrated, and have made arrangements at their works to turn out a

minimum of 5,000 standard houses during the first year. Similarly, Messrs. W. G. Tarrant, Sons and Co. of Byfleet are making arrangements for the mass production of three different types of two-storey timber and brick cottages, one pair being now in course of completion; while the Parkstone Joinery Company of Parkstone, Dorset, is another firm engaged in the mass production of wooden houses.

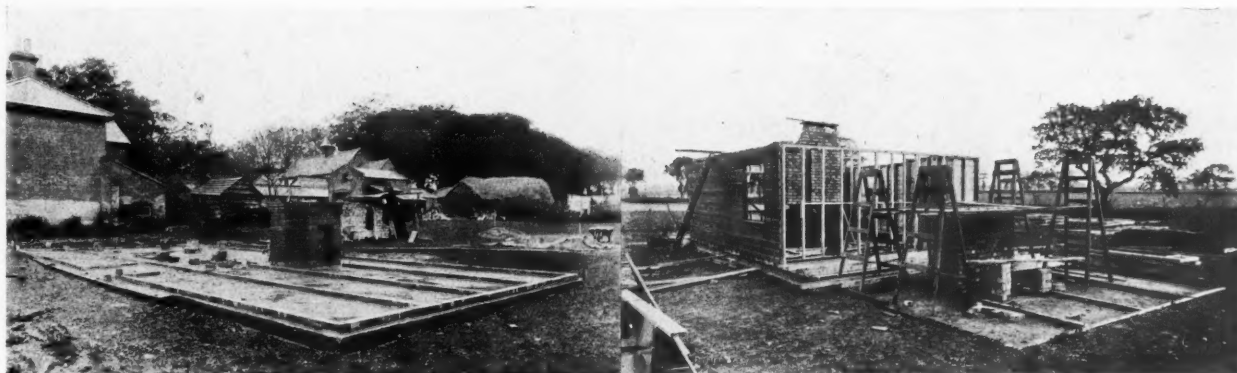
About a fortnight ago I inspected the standard house at Norwich, and found it to be thoroughly substantial and well put together. In connection with its construction, more especially its weatherboarding and roof, we must dismiss all idea of the Army hut, for this is not in any sense a temporary building, as may be judged from the fact that the Ministry of Health approves a loan period of forty years in respect of it. The site has 4ins. of concretelaid over it, with 6ins. under the external walls and one half course of brickwork under the creosoted sleeper plates. The walls consist of studding at 12in. centres, weatherboarded on



Plan.



The house and its surroundings.



The foundation ready.

First day's work



Sixth day.

The house complete.

STANDARD WOODEN HOUSE, NORWICH.  
Boulton and Paul.





AN AMERICAN BUNGALOW.  
*Aymar Entbury II.*

the outside and lined inside with  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. fibrous plaster slabs or asbestos cement sheeting, the ceilings being similarly finished. The casements are of wood and the roof is covered with pantiles, although in this particular house (which is used as a gardener's cottage) these pantiles are a slight extravagance, as the specification for the standard wooden house speaks of asbestos cement slates. The plan is of the non-parlour type. There is a single living-room-kitchen 18ft. 4ins. by 10ft. 6ins., with three bedrooms on one side, and scullery, bathroom, larder, etc., on the other. The general effect of the interior is good, and the arrangements are sufficient to make the home comfortable. Messrs. Boulton and Paul give assurance that the timber they are using for their standard houses is thoroughly well seasoned, being drawn from a stock that they have had in hand for three years or more. The weatherboarding has a locked tail joint that ensures weather-tightness, and is treated on the outside with Solignum. The houses are being manufactured in sections, and it takes very little time to bolt these together in place on the site. The particular house illustrated took about a month to erect. It is the speed of erection which gives special claim for standard houses of this kind. As regards cost, the following are the figures: For the shell of the house, £368. To this has to be added the internal fittings (stoves, copper, sink and bath) £47, brick chimneys and foundations approximately £115, and cost of erection approximately £143. This brings us to a total cost of £673, and so places the wooden house on much the same level as other methods of construction. But it is claimed to be just as lasting, and attention is directed to the old timbered cottages up and down the country that have weathered a century of exposure and are still sound. A row of such cottages is here shown, and an illustration of an American bungalow is given above to indicate that there is nothing so pleasing as a white finish for a wooden house, whether it be paint or whitewash; it seems to redeem it at once of all suggestion of the shanty or temporary building.

Another form of wooden house construction is that adopted by Sir Charles Ruthen for his villas at Newton, Swansea. These are of timber frame covered on the outside with Bishopric stucco board. This is an American product, consisting of a series of dovetail laths embedded in asphalt mastic on a fibre backing. The material is supplied in wide rolls, and lengths of it are simply nailed in position against the studding, and then finished on the exterior with rough cast or with brick, both of which methods have been adopted at Newton. The system thus

resolves itself largely into a substitute for the old manner of building with lath and plaster on a timber frame, and the main point put forward in connection with it is that of speed of erection. Houses of such construction have been built at Newton in thirty days, and it is claimed for them that they are thoroughly sound and weather-resisting (the site on which they are built is certainly a very exposed one).

Sir Charles Ruthen's main object was to convince people that wooden-frame houses could be erected rapidly and at less cost than brick or stone houses, that when completed their appearance would be as satisfactory as ordinary houses, and that they would be strong, reasonably lasting (say not less than fifty years), reasonably fireproof, habitable as soon as completed, damp-proof and vermin-proof; and at the same time he wanted to show that houses so built were just as well suited to the needs of the professional classes as to the working classes. With regard to cost, he says: "I have been able to obtain

figures which convince me that the actual cost per superficial yard of the shell, that is to say the timber framing or studding, the shield fixed upon the outside and plastered two coats of cement plaster, with the inside lathed and plastered in the usual way, or covered with asbestos sheeting or fibrous wall board, is less to the extent of 7s. than the same shell would be if erected in 11in. hollow brickwork. The actual cost of the type A house at Newton has been £125 less than the same house would have cost in 11in. hollow brickwork."

There is, of course, room for every sound method of building which can be adopted as a supplementary method to brick construction, and wooden houses make their claim in this respect. They cannot, however, be obtained for the ridiculously small sums certain newspaper enthusiasts first stated. From the figures given in the recent White Paper issued by the Ministry of Health (Cmd. 426) it is seen that even with mass production wooden houses are going to cost between £600 and £700 complete. Some brick houses are costing less, though the majority are costing more; but even putting the two methods on the same basis of cost, there is no question that the standardised wooden house is far ahead in respect of speed of erection; and, as time is very largely the essence of the contract under present conditions—the new houses being so urgently needed—there is good reason to consider this form of construction. Against it must be counted the greater cost of maintenance, heavier fire insurance rates, and the fact that the bulk of the material has to be imported, so contributing not only to the transport difficulties, but also to the rates of exchange, which are already so adverse to us. These are items of considerable significance.

R. RANDAL PHILLIPS



OLD WEATHERBOARDED COTTAGES AT CAPEL, SURREY.

(From "Small Houses of the Late Georgian Period.")

## £500 BRICK COTTAGES

IN the recent full-dress housing debate in the House of Commons, Mr. Pretyman said: "I cannot myself understand why the cost of building at the present time should be so heavy as is stated. It seems to me, as a practical man who has been responsible for building many hundreds of working-class cottages, and who has spent many hours and days going into every detail of these houses, and seeing how the necessary accommodation could be provided at the lowest possible cost—I cannot see how it can be necessary, even at present prices, to spend £800 or £900 to build a working-class house. If any proof were necessary that it could be done otherwise, I can only tell the House that this very week—last Monday—I inspected some houses that have been built by a builder for sale, and the houses are being sold at a profit, and at £500. These houses are built with Fletton bricks, which have been transported from Peterborough to Ipswich, a distance of seventy-five miles. They have five rooms. There are two downstairs rooms and three bedrooms upstairs, and all the necessary fittings, bath and other accommodation that are required in a cottage. I went carefully over these houses, acting as my own clerk, as I have done for forty years. I could find no fault with the houses. They are plainly built, not extravagantly. A minimum—they do not pretend to be anything more than a minimum. But they do provide all that is required, and all that, in my opinion, is required in a working-class house. They can be built, and sold at a profit, for £500. I have here a letter from the builder who built them, in which he says: 'I commenced my experiment six months ago by putting sufficient money on the table to build forty of my ideal dwellings. The instructions to my people were that these dwellings should be sold to purchasers who could find £100—and mostly all workers to-day can put up this amount—and pay the balance of £400 by instalments. This plan is working uncommonly well. So far I am quite satisfied that my scheme can be carried out without any expense whatever to the tax payers of the country.' Then my friend goes on to say that he himself, the president of the Builders' Federation of that district, is perfectly prepared, and so is the society of which he is president, to put their experience at the disposal of the Ministry. That is a fact and an object-lesson. Everybody knows that there is a very large difference in building conditions in different parts of the country. Because one man has succeeded in building a good house which can be sold for £500 at a profit, it does not follow that everybody can do it. I am perfectly well aware of that. I do not want to press this single case too far. But the difference between £500 and the figure which is quoted as being tendered to the local authorities goes really far beyond the difference which ought to exist merely because of local reasons."

To which Mr. Lloyd George replied later in the debate: "I am told there are specially favourable conditions there, and so much is that the case that the figures which have come to the Ministry of Health range between £550 in that area, and my

hon. and gallant friend has an advantage of £50 on that to between perhaps £800 or £900 in other areas. You must take the district into account, and therefore it is no use quoting one particular area where the conditions are favourable and saying: 'Here is a house built in this area for £500, and therefore houses ought to be built in every area for that amount.' You cannot do it. However, I am struck with the case quoted by my hon. and gallant friend. He has an advantage of £50, and that



COTTAGES AT IPSWICH.

T. R. Parkington.

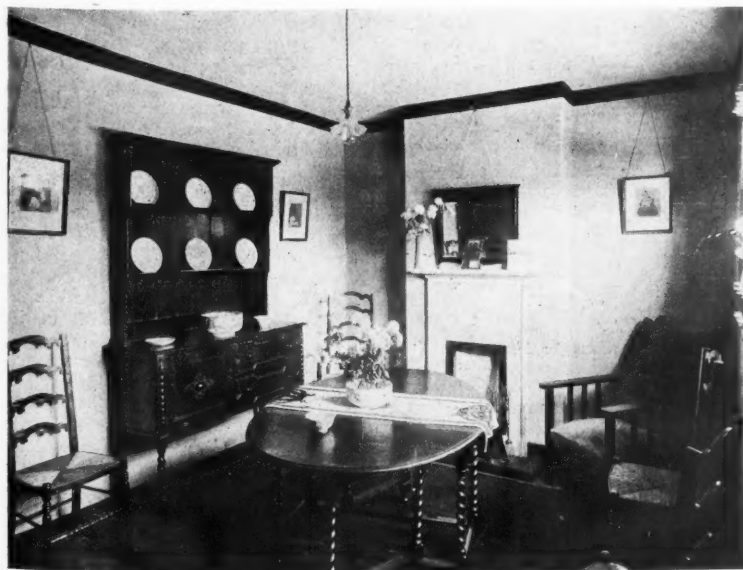
means, if you are going to pay 8 per cent., a sum of £4 difference in the rent of the house, which is no mean advantage to a working man."

The houses in question have been designed by Mr. T. R. Parkington of Ipswich, who says, in reply to an enquiry addressed to him on the matter: "Sanction for building forty of them was given by the Public Health Committee on August 21st last. Since that date several of these buildings have been completed and are occupied, and other blocks are in course of erection. They are being sold at a profit by the builders for £500 each, which price includes the freehold site, road-making, fences and all in. No cross fences between the dwellings to the front garden lay-outs are permitted. The houses are brick built on cement concrete foundations and are roofed with Welsh slates. The mansard type of roof which I have adopted greatly reduces the cost. I have had one of the houses furnished at a cost of £160, and the result is most satisfactory and comfortable in every respect. This furnished house will remain on exhibition to all comers for the ensuing six months."

From the photograph of the exterior, here reproduced, it will be agreed, I think, that the houses are very presentable; one might criticise details, such as the curved bottom rail of the upper sashes and the diagonal slating, but these are trifling in comparison with the general satisfactory appearance of the houses, both without and within. A plan is before me as I write, but permission to reproduce it is withheld. It, too, is open to criticism—what plan is not?—but considered as a whole it can be regarded as meeting the requirements very well indeed. The parlour (130ft. super.) is at the front, entered from a small lobby out of which the staircase rises, and opening off the parlour is the living-room (180ft. super.), with pantry on one side and bath and wash-house on the other, with a tiny scullery beyond; the bedrooms upstairs consisting of one large room at the front (155ft. super.) and two smaller bedrooms at the back (respectively 100ft. super. and 60ft. super.). Two of the bedrooms have fireplaces.

Exactly how Mr. Parkington is enabled to build these houses under existing conditions to sell at £500, and to make a profit on the transaction, is his own particular mystery, but it no doubt rests mainly on the fact that he is working on certain defined costs for material and labour, and is, therefore, in a different position to contractors who submit tenders for houses that are to be built at some future date and under possibly altered conditions, and who therefore protect themselves fully against all contingencies; with the resulting high-figured tenders that stagger the local authorities.

R. R. P.



A PARLOUR.



# AMAZING SALES OF THOROUGHBREDS

## A MILLENNIUM FOR BREEDERS?

**W**E have heard a lot in recent years about the poor breeder of horses. His laments have been heard from one end of the land to the other. He got no financial aid from the State and racecourse executives gave no premiums to the breeders of winning horses as is the case in France. It was for him that racing was kept alive during the war. Here the State did come to the rescue, and racing people, who wanted racing to go on, did not mind then pleading the cause of the breeders with almost suspicious pathos. Stop racing, they said, and crash would go

that it must stand as a record? If the boom and super-boom develop in this crescendo-like rate there must be another record created a year hence. One believed the limit in dazzling prices was touched at the yearling sales at Doncaster, but apparently the world is starved of bloodstock and it must be restocked. Fortunately for those already in the business the United Kingdom is the only country which can supply the "goods." Then, in addition to the foreign demand, which must steadily increase rather than diminish, there is the rivalry among the new owners on the English Turf. Their money bags are full to overflowing and they can bid one against the other, leaving the sellers simply dazed by the fabulous prices paid to them.

In order to give readers—especially those living abroad—some idea of the way buyers set about making this new record, I will touch on a few of the most remarkable sales from day to day during the week. No doubt some easily satisfied folk are convinced they picked up bargains, but who can help marvelling at some of the prices I am about to quote? Thus on the first day Lord Wilton got 11,250 guineas for five quite ordinary animals. Three of them are two year olds of moderate calibre. Perhaps it is only what it should be that Lord Wilton, who has experienced the sensation of paying big money for bloodstock, should now be given a taste of a highly successful vendor's emotions. I congratulate him. Then if Mr. Watkin Williams was satisfied to give 3,700 guineas for Scher Wisdom, a three year old by an unknown sire, that has only a single minor race to its credit, there is nothing to be said except to note in passing the brilliant future it seems to predict for owners of horses with only humble pretensions. Lord Rosebery got wonderful prices for two of the four mares he sold—7,000 guineas for the ten year old Verve (dam of Light Hearted) and 6,000 guineas for the seven year old Dark Ronald mare, Dark Flight. The former goes to Mr. James Buchanan's Lavington Park Stud at Petworth, and the other, I believe, is destined for America. On this same day (the Tuesday) a very moderate three year old named Trespasser, which I, in my appalling misjudgment would have valued at £500 and no more, fetched 2,300 guineas. I hope his new owner, Mr. Percy Heybourne, will reap the reward of his eye-opening dash.

It was on the same day that Mr. P. P. Gilpin thought fit to refuse 11,200 guineas for the two year old Comrade. The reserve price was rather higher. Well, well! He gave 25 guineas for him as a yearling, and though he has run three times and won three times the form is not wonderful—at least not such as to make it seem reasonable to an ordinary mortal that 11,200 guineas should be refused for him. I only hope the gods will give me the chance of being offered nearly £12,000 for something which only cost me £25. May I express a hope that Comrade will keep sound and well in order that Mr. Gilpin may be given every opportunity to justify his action in refusing what the gods offered him. On the third day I think Mr. Cholmondeley was right in giving 5,600 guineas for Karenza, by William the Third, and certain in foal to The Tetrarch. Not only is the mare in her prime and exceedingly well bred, but the foal she now carries may make as much as she cost now when it comes to be offered as a yearling in 1921.

But in any congratulations surely a big parcel of them should be handed out to Lord D'Abernon for getting 11,000 guineas for his six year old mare Eos, by Orby from Renaissance, and in foal to Tracery. Just think of it! Eleven thousand guineas for a mare unproven and as a racehorse the winner of the Cambridge-shire with only 7st. 6lb. on her back! Why, all

history only has two instances of mares making more money—La Fleche, a great mare truly, at 12,600 guineas, and Flair, a classic winner anyhow, who with a foal at foot, was sold for 15,000 guineas. Last week this same Flair, now sixteen years old, did not make her reserve of 1,000 guineas. Mr. J. B. Robertson, a great student of breeding, was the buyer for Sir Gilbert Greenall, whose yearlings sold splendidly at Doncaster last September. Of course, I hope the buyer has secured a bargain, but at least he will not quarrel with me for being a trifle dazed over the transaction. Evidently great things are expected of anything bred by the President of the Thoroughbred Breeders'



FOAL BY CORYRA—DITTANY SOLD FOR 1,850 GUINEAS.



W. A. Rouch

Copyright.

COMRADE BY BACHELOR'S DOUBLE—SOURABAYA.

Mr. P. P. Gilpin, who gave 25 guineas for him as a yearling, refused 11,200 guineas for him as a two year old.

the national industry of horse-breeding, never again to rise from its ashes. So the War Cabinet melted and permitted racing at Newmarket solely in the interests of the breed of the thoroughbred.

Yesterday we were supposed to pity the breeder's plight. To-day we envy his good fortune. To-morrow we shall continue to do so; for as I write I have before me the amazing details of the December sale week at Newmarket. Messrs. Tattersall sold thoroughbreds of all ages, bringing in the aggregate no less than 351,846 guineas. The total is simply stupendous. Of course, it is easily a record for these December sales, but who can say

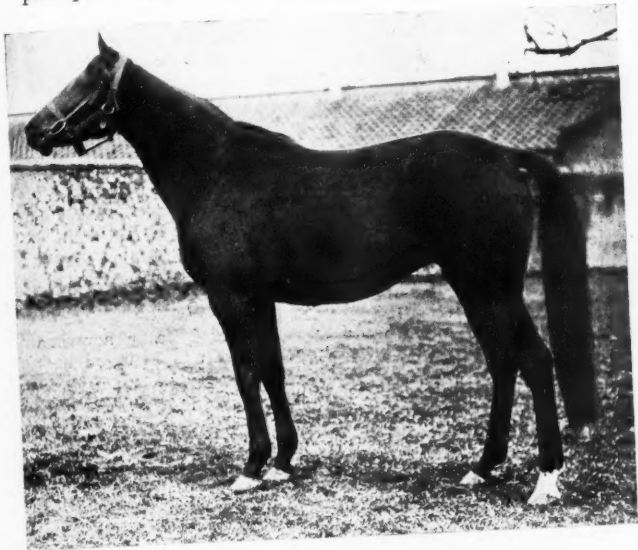
Dec: 13th, 1919.]

Association. Lord D'Abernon also got 4,800 guineas for Brother to Eos, a two year old that was little removed from good selling plate class. Perhaps this was the most stirring incident in a wonderful week. Another of Lord D'Abernon's to sell for a phenomenal price was Tenedos, by Polymelus from Dora Sol. Admittedly the breeding is right, but 5,000 guineas is about Mr. James White's price. It is said this mare is a bit difficult to manage, but 5,000 guineas is not paid, even in these times I take it, for one with a serious "if" about it. The fact that 3,500 guineas were given for a two year old named Northfleet, which has yet to win a race, is scarcely worth noting and, perhaps, I ought to apologise for doing so, only a friend of mine

sent a commission to buy this one up to 1,000 guineas and he actually expected he would get it!

So we come to the fourth day—Thursday—when the One Thousand Guineas winner, Roseway—a failure later—fetched 7,200 guineas, the buyer being Sir Gilbert Greenall. Well, if Eos was worth 11,000 guineas, then a classic winner was cheap at 7,200, that is, if you like to reason in that way. I give a little gasp again as I read that Plymouth Rock, who cost under 100 guineas as a yearling, fetched 5,000 guineas. More power to the ex-jockey, Walter Griggs, who was the vendor! I am tempted to mention other instances, but must forbear as I am at the end of my space.

PHILIPPOS.



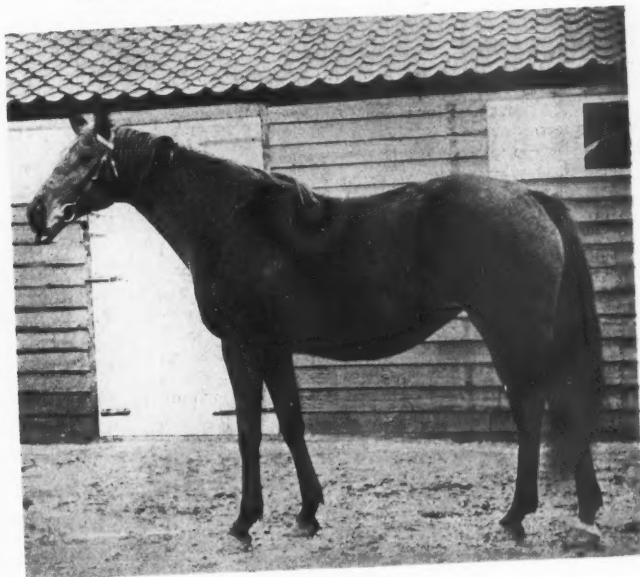
Eos, bought by Sir Gilbert Greenall for 11,000 gns.



Sentiment, bought by Lord Glanely for 5,100 gns.



Verve, sold by Lord Rosebery for 7,000 gns.

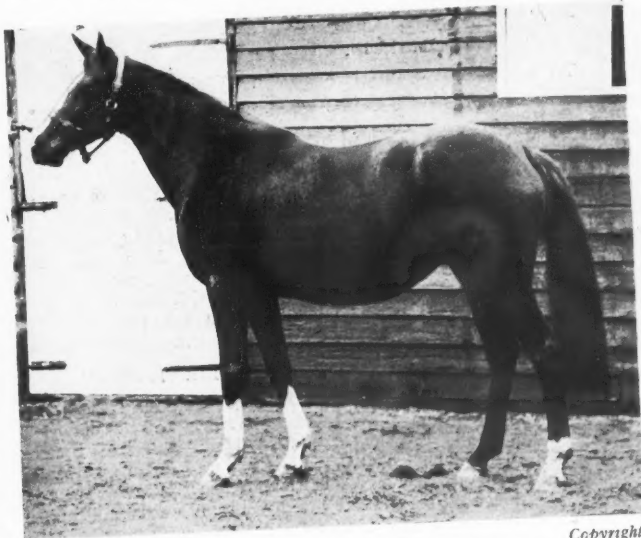


Dark Sapphire, sold by the Old Buckenham Stud for 5,000 gns.



W. A. Rouch.

Dark Flight, sold by Lord Rosebery for 6,000 gns.



Copyright.

Karenza, sold to Mr. Cholmondeley for 5,600 gns.



# ON THE GREEN

BY BERNARD DARWIN.

## MR. BALL AND THE CHAMPIONSHIP CONDITIONS.

**B**Y the time these words appear the future of the Amateur Championship will have been decided at the delegates' meeting, so that it would be futile to discuss the subject further for the moment. But I should like to quote one remark made to me in a letter from a very famous golfer as to Mr. Angus Hambro's article in last week's COUNTRY LIFE. Mr. Hambro implied that Mr. Ball had been beaten several times by "young and unknown" players who got away with a lucky start. My correspondent has looked up Mr. Ball's record in the Championship for twenty-one years, from 1886 to 1907, and during those years Mr. Ball has only been beaten by the following: Henry Lamb, Horace Hutchinson, Laidlay, Mure Fergusson, Balfour-Melville, F. G. Tait, Maxwell, Robb, R. B. Sharp and Angus Macdonald. Of these the only two who may not be very well known to modern golfers are the last two. As to Mr. Sharp, my correspondent says that at the time "he was known to be the strongest player in the North of Scotland," and Mr. Angus Macdonald a few years back was very well known in Edinburgh; a determined, experienced player and a very fine putter. Any golfer, however good, might have been beaten by anyone in that list. My correspondent is quite right to rejoice over his point. He has shown that Mr. Hambro was a little too positive in his remarks. But then what a wonderful player Mr. Ball is! Mr. Hambro might almost be justified if he adopted him as the exception to prove his rule.

## MISS LEITCH'S FINE GOLF.

A few days ago I played golf for the House of Commons. I do not quite know why, nor do I know why Captain Hutchinson played nor several other gentlemen whose constituencies I can discover in no book of reference. However, we had a very agreeable day at Addington and, judging from the result of the match, I am disposed to think politicians are an even more paltry race than unkind people tell us they are, for we were beaten into a cocked hat. Among our conquerors were Miss Cecil Leitch; the match was by foursomes, and she and her partner, Mr. Abercromby, won three of their matches and halved the other. I have often seen Miss Leitch play before, but never have I been so much impressed by her game. I am quite sure she is decidedly a better player than she was before the war. She is both longer and steadier. The question is often discussed what the lady champion's handicap would be in a men's club, and I have heard magnanimous males say, in a tone of conscious kindness, that she should be rated at two or three. Personally, I think at the present moment she would be scratch, and a very good scratch at that. There are a great many people, entitled by their handicap to compete for the Amateur Championship and often to be found competing in it, who are not all well qualified to play Miss Leitch on level terms, that is, if they want to win their half-crowns. She is really horribly good just now, and I view the arrival of Miss Alexa Stirling, the American Lady Champion, next year with great tranquillity, fine player though she undoubtedly is.

## MARTIN.

To all who ever played golf at Woking there is no more familiar figure than that of Martin, whom Mr. Ambrose has caught characteristically bending over his beloved putting greens. Martin has now retired to enjoy a well earned rest after having done admirable work ever since the course was first made. A great golfer he is not, but a great hand at understanding the capricious habits of grass and inducing it to grow he is. I do not profess to know his secret, but he certainly has some instinct almost amounting to genius. Even now he cannot altogether keep away from putting greens, and he has lately taken in hand one or two recalcitrant ones at Worplesdon, apparently with great success, for they were very good the last time I played there.

## FOUR-BALL MATCHES WITH "SIDE ISSUES."

In the American *Golf Illustrated* for November I have just come across a rather illuminating little piece of news. It concerns a local rule recently made at the National Golf Links, near Southampton on Long Island, which is one of the finest and perhaps the most difficult golf course in the world. This rule decrees "that any four-ball match using a card and pencil must allow any other match not using a card and pencil, to go through, on request being made." The editorial comment is

interesting: "A genuine four-ball match, without side issues, is actually very little slower than a single; with side issues, it is one of the slowest things in creation, and it was to kill the four-ball match with side issues that the National Links made the above rule, since it is obviously impossible to carry the details of half a dozen side matches in one's head." We can all thoroughly understand the point of view of the National Links Committee; what is incomprehensible is the state of mind of those who play the travesty of golf which necessitates the passing of such a rule. I have once—and only once—played a four-ball match in which there were "side issues," namely, separate single matches between the four players. That was eighteen years ago, and I never have done it since. Of all dreary and contemptible games—but I must restrain my feelings; and yet the American golfer, an otherwise sane being and a delightful person to play with, apparently deems it amusing. It only shows—for this is really, I think, at the bottom of the whole business—that we ought to pray night and morning from too consuming a passion for counting our scores.

## THE KEENNESS OF CHICAGO.

In the same excellent American paper I came across a wonderful example of keenness. I have always believed that



## A GENIUS OF THE PUTTING GREEN.

for a town given up to the whole-hearted worship of golf St. Andrews was not in it with Chicago; and now I am sure I am right. In America there are during the summer many "invitation tournaments," and very entertaining they are. The first day is given up to round of score play, by means of which the players qualify to play off by match play in the first, second or third sixteen. In the East, as my authority says, the qualifying round is generally looked on "as a necessary evil that has to be endured for the sake of the two days of pleasant match play which follow." Not so in Chicago. Here the usual form of invitation tournament is apparently seventy-two holes of score play, with no chance of relaxation of any kind. Imagine playing in an open championship—for that is what it comes to—for fun! No wonder a city that is not at all rich in courses—for the State of Illinois was not designed by Providence for golf—can produce fine players when it has got such a spring of keenness bubbling up in it. People think of Chicago as a city of wheat

pits and beef trusts, but these are subsidiary interests. It is really a city of golf.

#### THE LATE MR. R. S. HILTON.

Everybody who ever met him must have been very sorry to hear of the death of Mr. R. S. Hilton, and all golfers will sympathise with Mr. Harold Hilton on his brother's death. To the quite young generation of players Reggie Hilton was little known, but he was a very good golfer for all that. Schoolmasters have plenty of golfing holidays, but they cannot take them when they like, and so Reggie could make no figure in the Amateur Championship. My own chief recollection of him is as one of the Royal Liverpool side that used to beat the Oxford

and Cambridge Golfing Society. At the top of their team were the three great ones of Hoylake: we knew we could not beat them, but we did sometimes hope to win some matches towards the middle of the side. Yet we found the younger Hilton, the two Crowthers, Ned Spencer (what a long time since he played now!) and others of the second line just about as hard to beat as the first. Reggie Hilton had a most smooth and finished style; he had plenty of strength and he was a devoted student of the game. He was a better golfer than many with more widely known names. What is so much more, he had a most kindly and welcoming and friendly nature. Memories of many pleasant talks with him come back to me as I think of those old Hoylake matches.

## HOCKEY

By R. C. LYLE.

**H**OCKEY is a game which has never attracted crowds of spectators nor an enormous multitude of players. Yet those who play it love it both as a scientific pastime and as a really good form of exercise. There is no

team game which needs such a close observance of the rules as does hockey, for it can be made, and I am afraid often is made, into a game exceedingly unpleasant to watch and still more unpleasant to play. The use of the body, tackling on the wrong side, hitting an opponent's stick, and the unfair use of hands and feet are all too prevalent in present-day hockey. The absence of satisfactory umpires in any number makes this difficulty very hard to overcome. In addition to the very strict observance of the rules, the game needs a very level ground, neither too dry nor too wet. Given all these things, there are few faster games and no other game in which science is of such paramount importance compared with physical power. There are still those who believe that because girls play hockey it cannot be a game for men. An Australian athlete in residence at Oxford was asked recently by the Master of Balliol if he had ever played hockey. The Australian said neither yes nor no, but replied, "Isn't that a girls' game?"

The son of the Master of Balliol is an English International hockey player. Those who have never seen first-class hockey and can spare a fine Saturday afternoon away from other

pleasures ought to go to watch Beckenham play on their home ground. I have chosen Beckenham because at the present moment they are the best club in the country and because their



A HALF-BACK ATTEMPTING TO STOP THE BALL WITH HIS HANDS AND USING HIS LEGS ILLEGALLY.

ground is an ideal one. Hockey is played by Beckenham as it was intended to be played. It is fast, scientific, and the team contains in A. D. Stocks the greatest player of the present time,

who can apparently play equally well in any position on the field. He is almost as amazing a master of a moving ball and a stick as the great Inman is of a cue and a stationary ball. He may not possess the elusive superiority of S. H. Shoveller of Hampstead, but his ability is more obvious. We can see what Stocks is doing and understand how he does it even if we cannot do it ourselves. We cannot possibly do what Shoveller does because we do not know how he does it. In that way Shoveller is the greater artist, but I doubt if even he was a greater player than Stocks is at present.



THE DEFENCE BEATEN. S. H. SAVILLE ABOUT TO SHOOT.



Hampstead is another club which plays the ideal game. S. H. Shoveller has played for them for many years, and is still in many ways incomparable. They may not be quite so strong now as they were a few years ago, but they are still a powerful team. Bromley, Southgate, Wimbledon, Teddington, Staines and Richmond are also clubs which can turn out a strong side, but their hockey is not so finished as that of the other two clubs I have mentioned. A club which existed for only a few years—about 1908-1911—and which played good hockey was the Essex Calves, who had so few members that if two were ill or unable to play for any other reason they could not turn out a side. They did much for Essex hockey.

There are probably more men playing hockey at Oxford and Cambridge than any other game. It is practically the only game played during the Lent term, whereas Rugby and Association football are each played in the Christmas term. Oxford and Cambridge hockey has always been good but in slightly different styles. Cambridge hockey has at times been too scientific, if such a thing be possible. It has not been energetic enough. Oxford hockey, on the other hand, has been sometimes too energetic. In the days of John Beaumont (1907), L. M. Robinson (1908) and A. F. Leighton (1910) Cambridge hockey was amazingly clever—in fact, Robinson's side of 1908 was as clever a side as ever played—yet they were not invincible. They were almost too clever for the sides they had to play against. They almost overdid the push pass, and bustling sides used to upset them very considerably. Yet we cannot help thinking that they played the ideal game and a game which was more hockey than the hit and run methods of some Oxford sides of that period.

The game is now played at many schools, but Marlborough hockey still remains the best. More great players have come from Marlborough than from all the other schools put together. A member of the Marlborough side who went to Oxford or Cambridge could, if he wished to, always obtain his hockey Blue. Indeed, many players who got Blues were not nearly good enough in their school days for the Marlborough side. C. S. Atkin (England), W. F. Smith (England) and R. Uhtoff were three members of a very strong Cambridge side who were never in the Marlborough side. Felsted has also produced a large number of fine players, as also has Rossall, in whose game dribbling plays a very large part, and St. Lawrence, Ramsgate, has recently turned out a number of good players who have been very well taught by A. C. B. Ballerby and H. O. Cooper, two Cambridge Blues.

All games have great families, a statement which is, perhaps not well put, but has a definite meaning. The great hockey family is the family of Stocks, the sons and daughters of Archdeacon Stocks of Lutterworth. They are, or were, all really great players, with A. D. and F. C. perhaps the greatest. F. W.

and J. L. and C. L. and E. H. were also all very fine players. They played beautiful hockey, and the push pass, if not their actual invention, was brought to perfection by them, and especially by F. C. They realised that a ball which is hit is probably always spinning and may bounce awkwardly. Further, for a ball to be hit the stick must be taken back, an action which takes time. If the ball is pushed there is no waste of time and no spin on the ball which does not bounce. It is the quickest method of passing that there is and it is the easiest to take. Like all clever things it is a danger in the hands of the bad player who scoops instead of pushing and thereby puts the ball in the air, the one place at hockey where it never ought to be.

Army hockey is a wonderful game, in which hard hitting predominates. There is sufficient danger in an ordinary regimental match to satisfy the most bloodthirsty soldier, but it is nevertheless a most enjoyable game and an especially popular one with the Army in India, where the native soldiers have taken to the game in the most whole-hearted way. Hockey is also played in the Royal Navy, but not to the same extent as in the Army.

The list of great players who lost their lives in the war is a long one and contains many of the best players of the years before the war. J. Y. Robinson, the old Oxford captain, was the most finished half-back, excepting the Rev. F. C. Stocks, whom I ever saw. J. A. Lovell was a fine, hard-hitting full-back. Philip Collins was only an average player, but he did an enormous amount of work for the game as Hon. Secretary of the Hockey Association. J. A. Croft, A. I. Draper, H. J. Goodwin, R. O. Lagden, B. P. Neville, R. G. Pridmore, A. F. H. Round, B. W. Vann and L. F. W. A. Kendall were other great players who will be much missed this season.

Hockey is nominally governed by the Hockey Association, but, as is the case with so many other amateur games, there is very little government about the whole thing. For example, leagues and competitions are not officially allowed and yet they exist on all sides. There are League competitions at Cambridge, a knock-out tournament at Oxford, and all sorts and conditions of competitions in the Army. Still, so long as they are not officially allowed, everything seems to be correct and no one worries. Legislation is seldom attempted, which, after all, is a wise policy in connection with purely amateur games. There is one act of legislation which is, however, urgently needed, and that is a law forbidding the playing of an extra half-back or back by teams who cannot find a goal-keeper. Such teams are spoiling the game for every side against whom they play. If the Hockey Association do not feel sufficiently strong to bring in such a law, then it is more than probable that when next year's fixture lists are made up certain clubs will find themselves without matches.



AN EXCELLENT AND FAIR TACKLE WITH A STICK.

## NATURE NOTES

## THE KIANG

**F**EW people in the world have had an opportunity of seeing the wild ass of Thibet or kiang, as he is generally called. His habitat is far away in the Central Himalayas on the table lands that are situated at 13,000ft. and upwards above sea level. I have seen him, only on the Lingti plains, between Pang and Rukchen, east of the Bara Larcha Pass (16,000ft.), which leads from Lahoul, in British, to Ladakh, in Kashmir territory. Here the kiang may be found in small numbers, but further east, in Rudok, they are in vast herds. There is no trophy to be got by killing the poor beasts; they are not good for food, and there is no danger attached to the pursuit of them, so that no true sportsman would shoot them; their only enemies, therefore, are the snow leopard and the wolf; they are not inordinately shy of human beings and will often approach to within about 200yds. of travellers, but never nearer.

They can travel at a terrific rate when frightened, and unless very young, are never caught. The back is fawn colour, legs and belly, white; a dark, but not black, line runs down the centre of the back; head and ears darker than the back; muzzle white, tail short and shaped like that of the domestic donkey.

In appearance the kiang closely resembles the wild ass of the Runn of Kutch, and both inhabit vast, sandy deserts; the latter, in a semi-tropical, and the former in a semi-arctic climate, for in these lofty Himalayan uplands the thermometer frequently falls below zero (Fahrenheit) in the winter, although the summer temperature sometimes registers as much as 100deg. in the sun.

The specimen, a photograph of which I am able to send you, was brought into Kula when I was there on a shooting expedition. He had been caught as a tiny foal by some Mohammedan traders, who wanted to sell him to me for Rs700. I did not purchase, for I knew that he would not live long at so low an altitude; but he was purchased later, for a lesser sum, by the Forest Officer, and within a year he died. R. H. T.

## THE VANITY OF THE GREEN PLOVER.

The high tide had come rushing up the estuary and had almost covered the wide stretches of sand and mud, when long curving lines of green plover came out of the haze of the distant bay and wound snake-like over the fast flowing tide until they reached the salt marsh at the head of the estuary, and here they settled.

This long curving flight is interesting to watch. It seems peculiar to the green plover when driven off their distant feeding grounds by the force of the inflowing sea. The long line, composed of some thousands of green plover, sways and curves backwards and forwards as if the birds were seeking a place to settle, but, however much they twist and turn, the flight never ends until they reach their favourite marsh. Here they stand, heads invariably turned towards the wind, looking extremely unhappy and uncomfortable in the haze of a cold winter's day. Some will wail disconsolately, while others will flutter up and settle again a few feet further on. As the tide turns and ebbs swiftly out the haze lifts, and the surface of the water, untouched by the slightest ripple and reflecting the grey, sunless sky overhead, becomes apparently a mass of molten metal, reflecting everything with the vividness of a mirror.

A narrow sandbank appears above the surface of the tide, and about fifty green plovers flight across the intervening water and alight, waiting for the sea to recede still further. However, they do not seem satisfied, and three fly up and seem about to return to the company on the marsh. Suddenly one of the green

plovers, flying low, catches sight of its reflection upon the mirror-like expanse of water over which it is flying. It pauses in its flight, with beating wings, swaying up and down over the mirrored reflection. Then it twists and turns, flinging itself into the air with all the abandon of a spring love dance. Wheeling aloft, it beats the air with its wings, but apparently the reflection is weaker at that height, for with a cry it hurls itself downwards almost into the water, wheeling up again and beating its wings with a loud sound, only to repeat the dance in mid-air again. This is repeated again and again, four or five green plovers taking part in the display. When these are tired they fly off to the marsh and their place is taken by other green plovers, which, catching sight of their reflections, perform the same evolutions as their predecessors.

Some of the green plovers, however, are not so delighted with the sight of their own reflections and these pass over the surface of the water without paying any attention to the looking-glass beneath them. The older plovers, or, perhaps I should say, the ones in full plumage, were the birds that made the most brilliant

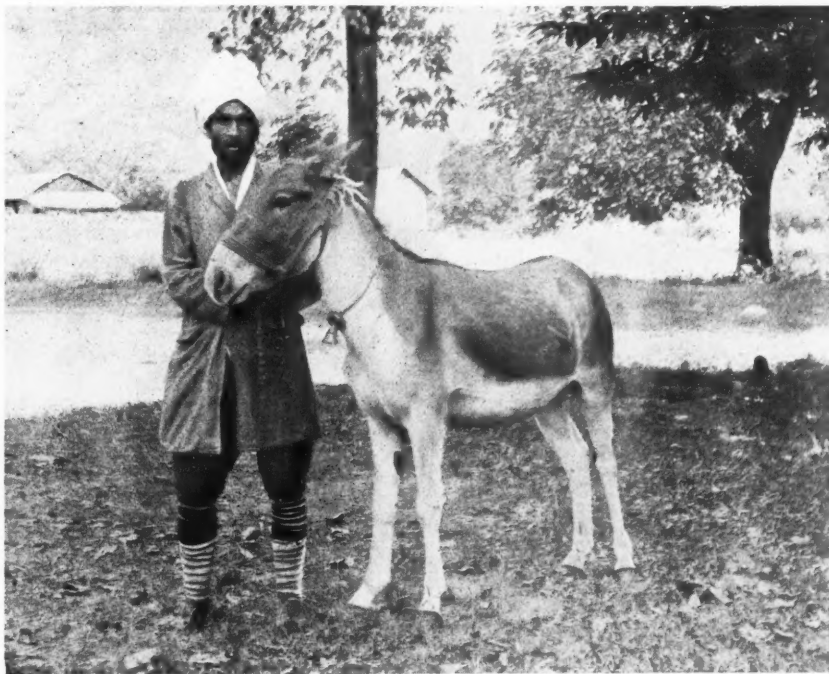
display of their vanity. The younger birds were evidently too full of their woe and the first wintry wind of their lives to feel any interest in their mirrored form. H. T. C.

## SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN AVALANCHES.

Avalanches are associated in the minds of most people with the Alps of Switzerland or the gigantic Asiatic or American mountain ranges; but those enthusiasts who indulge in the exhilarating sport of climbing when our native mountains are covered with snow know well that they are of quite common occurrence, and that, too, on a scale

of considerable magnitude. They do not, it is true, attain to the devastating and terrifying extent of those in the Alps or other great mountain ranges which are covered by eternal snows; but that they are of quite sufficient size and frequency to constitute a danger to be reckoned with, many climbers can testify from personal experience. Avalanches frequently occur on the mountains of Wales and Cumberland, but it is on the Grampians of Scotland that they attain to their greatest size in these isles. Particularly in the spring of the year, when the vast accumulations of snow on the summits of the peaks are beginning to be affected by the milder weather, it behoves the mountaineer to go warily in the corries; for the huge cornices are then apt to break away from the edges of the cliffs upon which they hang and, sweeping downwards, bear everything before them into the corry.

On one occasion four friends of mine were descending one of the peaks of the Black Mount in winter. They came to a place where a large fissure in the snow showed itself, and before he could be warned one of the party had incautiously started to walk along its lower edge. Immediately the entire hillside seemed to slide away, and in an instant the whole party was engulfed and careering rapidly down the mountain side smothered in snow. When they came to a standstill, one of them, fortunately, had his head uppermost. Two were only represented by their feet above the snow, and the fourth man was entirely invisible. Being roped together, he was easily located and hauled out. No one was any the worse for the exciting experience, in spite of the fact that several hundred feet had been descended in a few seconds; but one of the party lost his watch. A curious sequel to this occurrence was that in the following summer the man who lost his watch was climbing the same mountain, and, in looking about to try and locate the scene of the adventure, he suddenly saw his watch almost at his feet. [ASCON.]



THE WILD ASS OF THIBET.



## SHOOTING NOTES

## AFTER DUCK IN THE LIBYAN DESERT

**M**AN'S desperate efforts to escape from boredom occasionally land him in strange places and stranger plights. It was without doubt an excessive attack of ennui that led to our wild fowl shooting venture in the Libyan Desert, and fair indeed was the promise it held out of exercise for the camels and, still more, of variety of existence for the human element.

We were camped at Moghara, some thirty-two miles from the Mediterranean Coast, and remained in that place for a considerable period. From a military point of view we were there to intercept supplies going from the Delta via the oasis near Moghara to the Senussi. Let it be said, however, that, although our duck shooting expedition certainly took place in "enemy country," the danger from the hostile tribesmen at that time was not regarded as serious, and the risk of attack or capture of even so small a party as ours was not deemed a great one.

In all camps lack of variety in internal interests as a result of the routine and absence of external diversions, there is frequently present a very marked monotony, but surely the life of those in a desert encampment is tedium intensified to a degree. Day after day we stuck it out by means of some enlivening stratagem or other. Even a thunderstorm, which developed about eight days before our sport commenced, had its welcome side. At intervals we saw passing over the camp, duck and geese, flying in the regular wedge formation we were familiar with in England. After the passage of these birds, theories were beginning to form in the minds of some of the more practised and observant sportsmen in camp.

Then incoming outposts clinched and crystallised the theories. Twenty-five miles out from the camp at Moghara we had outposts at a place called Ras-el-Buggar, and they reported that on a large marsh some distance from the camp they had seen many wild fowl feeding. This report settled the matter in the minds of the sportsmen.

Very speedily an expedition to investigate the wild fowling possibilities of that marsh was formed. The party consisted of five officers and six men. To carry them over the intervening desert and to transport also tents, baggage, food and forage, about thirteen camels were taken.

Two hours after lunch on a Saturday the expedition left the camp at Moghara. After traversing the desert for a short distance we came to an extensive escarpment 400ft. to 500ft. in depth at places, and formed, judging from its superficial appearance, of reddish material, like limestone. Sharks' teeth and fossils, estimated by an expert to be about nine million years old, have been picked up on the escarpment, which lies east and west and is a considerable distance from the sea. Down the escarpment the camels made a very difficult passage, Nature having constructed the camel for travel on dead levels only. About five miles out from camp we passed the small oasis where there were one or two palm trees, some low scrub, which the camels were willing to eat, and a few wells of brackish water. Nearly two miles further on from the oasis we arrived at our destination—that nameless marsh or lake the wild fowl were reported to haunt.

Leaving the men to pitch the camp about three-quarters of a mile from the marsh, we picked up our guns and headed for the hunting ground. It proved to be a marshy lake, probably about a mile square. There were tracts of shallow, stagnant, brackish water, broken by large islands of dark-coloured mud and beds of weeds about 4ft. high. On the banks there was a large amount of low, green scrub, not prickly, and growing to about the same height as furze. All around lay "The Garden of Allah," the far-stretching waste of the inscrutable desert. The marsh, we reckoned, lay a few feet below sea level and about 200 miles from Cairo.

There were no dogs in our small "caravan," but a "gyppie" batman, bearing the very British name of "Ginger" did excellent work as a "retriever." The first evening's sport was productive of one snipe, and the information that the marsh was the haunt of innumerable snipe, duck, moorhens—and mosquitoes. The spoor of jackal and gazelle going down to drink were also observed. The birds noticed appeared to be the usual home varieties; fuller knowledge of the mosquitoes was to be acquired later! There seemed to be no fish in the water, and no geese were seen.

Day went out, in the sudden way it has there, after a particularly fine, but brief, sunset—a wonderful extravaganza of colour in which pink and gold were the predominant hues. A chilly breeze blew in an easterly direction from our camp to the marsh. Food had been prepared before dark and, as we were in enemy country—a fact we tended to forget—no fires or lights were permitted after nightfall. With hope of better sport on the following day, we sought our blankets, and all was peace in that part of the troubled world at least.

Night, however, proved more eventful than the day had been. We have said that a cold breeze was blowing from our camp to the marsh. About three o'clock on Sunday morning that breeze, which served to encourage the mosquitoes to remain at their marsh, dropped away completely. At once the mosquitoes, finding the wind barrier removed, swarmed in their legions and swiftly covered the thirteen hundred yards to our camp. Night became suddenly hideous. The tethered, tugging camels were maddened by their winged tormentors so badly that fires of "tibbin," or chopped straw, had to be lit around them in the hope of subduing the plague of insects even a little.

So effectively were the surprised sportsmen attacked that mosquito nets and the usual preventives were practically useless, and for some hours the little camp was in desperate straits. One "hero," who deserves special mention, stuck it out in his blankets for an hour and a half after hostilities opened, but the others, not being so pachydermatous, speedily got up and fought it out on their feet as well as might be.

Dismal morning trailed in at last. Two of the party were well-nigh unrecognisable, so badly had the mosquitoes treated them. Breakfast was a very horrible meal. An Australian in the camp, who had had a previous and extensive experience of mosquitoes in divers parts of the globe, said he had never met such vindictive ones as came from that marsh in the Libyan Desert. He added, with bitter humour, that it was perfectly obvious these insects were well organised and trained in blanket drill. A squad of six held up sufficient blanket to enable the main body to stream through the breach to the luckless victim.

Despite the wretched night, shooting was resumed at the marsh next forenoon and again in the afternoon for a little. From one cause or another, however, the total bag was a light one. The ducks were excessively wary and, on being stalked, flew to places in the marsh very difficult or quite impossible to approach to within shooting range. As for snipe, it seemed to be one of those bad days when one may see hundreds of snipe and yet succeed in getting only an occasional shot at them.

So, towards eventide, we packed up once more and headed for the parent camp at Moghara. We bore with us as evidence of our great hunting expedition one snipe, one kite, four ducks—and many, very many, "souvenirs" from those terrible mosquitoes!

F. E. CLIFTON.

## BOWDEN WIRE FOR FIRING GUN.

A friend of the writer has adapted a Bowden wire for firing a 10-bore gun mounted in his punt. As the device has proved most successful a short description may be of interest. The gun is supported on a crutch in the bows of the punt, and there is a rope round the butt to check recoil. The under inclined surface of the stock rests on a wooden support, and this latter has a sliding movement fore and aft along the floor of the punt. This device serves to control elevation, direction being given by the punt itself.

The Bowden wire has its outer tube secured to a clip screwed to the outside edge of the deck. This point of attachment can be either on the right or left, as may be most convenient. The inner wire projects and is made into ring form, so that the forefinger can be put through the ring to pull the wire and fire the gun. The other end of the outer tube is attached to the trigger guard, and the projecting inner wire hooks on to the trigger. If desired, two Bowden wires can be fitted, so as to give right and left firing at will.

The arrangement allows the punter to remain in the prone position, using the short hand paddles to the last moment, and he can fire instantly without moving his head. The same arrangement is to be applied next season to a heavy single 4-bore, which is to supersede the less powerful 10 bore. FLEUR-DE-LYS.